

1. What we knew

- Stroke patients who are treated in a specialist hospital stroke unit are more likely to get the right care at the right time, and are more likely to do better.^{2, 3}
- In 2010, hospital stroke services in London and Greater Manchester were centralised into a small number of specialist stroke units.
- This change meant many people had to travel further to hospital when they first had their stroke. As people got better, they were moved to a hospital nearer home.
- Little is known about how stroke patients and their carers feel about this way of arranging hospital care.¹

2. What we did

- We interviewed 36 stroke patients, 21 from London and 15 from Greater Manchester, shortly after they got home from hospital.
- We also talked to 17 of their friends and relatives.
- Using a framework drawing on previous research on patients' experience of stroke care, we asked all these people what they thought about the care received and what issues were most important to their experience.

3. What we found

- People thought that they were treated well and quickly by ambulance services and when they first arrived at hospital.
- Some people were worried about travelling further than their local hospital. However, they were reassured when staff explained clearly that they were being taken to a specialist unit.
- Some people said it was difficult for families visiting hospitals further away from home, but families said it was more important that their relatives got the best care.
- There were sometimes delays in getting moved to a local hospital, but as long as staff explained clearly what was happening most people did not mind too much.
- Some people were unsure about what care they would get once they were home.

4. What this means

- Centralised hospital stroke services can offer people a good experience of care.
- People felt that getting the best care was more important than having to travel further.
- People need clear information at every stage of care, for example about why they are not being taken to their local hospital, and when they will be able to move to a hospital nearer home.





References

1. **Perry C et al.** Patient experience of centralised acute stroke care pathways. **Health Expectations 2018**
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2. **Morris S et al.** Impact of centralising acute stroke services in English metropolitan areas on mortality and length of hospital stay: difference-in-differences analysis. **BMJ 2014**;349:g4757.
3. **Ramsay AIG et al.** Effects of centralizing acute stroke services on stroke care provision in two large metropolitan areas in England. **Stroke 2015**;46:2244-51.

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Find out more

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