

# THE STROKE AID SOCIETY

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## NEWSLETTER: JULY – AUGUST 2016

### UPDATE FROM THE STROKE AID SOCIETY

#### SANDRA REPORTS:

- ☺ On 5<sup>th</sup> July I had the pleasure of visiting our South Rand group. What a happy and pleasant morning we had. As always the members were having a good time. Sure this is the highlight of their week. Our facilitator Sylvia Birkhead put on a music quiz much to the delight of all concerned. Most of the members remembered the names of the songs and even the pictures that were shown on the computer. Well done South Rand, we are proud of you.
  
- ☺ Not to be outdone, South Rand came to visit us at Jabula and were entertained by member/committee member Neville Harvey who brought smiles and excitement with his rendition of music from yesteryear. A great time of excitement and camaraderie was had by all. Not forgetting the delicious tea that was served.  
Thank you Ken and Nico our drivers, for making the trip on a cold day. Yet the warmth that emanated from both groups was just what we all needed.
  
- ☺ Our Soweto group will also be visiting us very soon. We look forward to seeing them all again.
  
- ☺ I take this opportunity of wishing Sharlene our secretary a speedy recovery from her recent operation. Hurry back, we miss you



- ☺ To our dear friend Andrew, who keeps our vehicle safely parked every day, we wish you a speedy recovery from your recent illness.



- ☺ The Wits 2<sup>nd</sup> year Occupational Therapy students will again be visiting us at Jabula during August.
- ☺ The only feedback received from Lotto whether our application for funding has been approved is:

“Dear Mrs Colombick,

**Please be advised that your project is still at assessment stage.**

**From assessment it has to be quality assured and then it will be included onto a board pack for adjudication.**

Kind regards”



- ☺ Our current finances are **becoming depleted** and will only keep us going for another 6 months. We therefore need to find other means of fundraising ASAP.

*If anyone has ideas of how we can raise significant funds or knows of a company that will support us, we will be most grateful.*



## WHAT'S NEW IN THE TREATMENT/PREVENTION OF STROKE

Published online 18<sup>th</sup> April 18, 2016 in Heart.

**YORK, UK** — Although past research has shown a link between impaired social relationships and premature mortality, a new study suggests there may also be a **significant association with increased risk for coronary heart disease (CHD) and Stroke.**



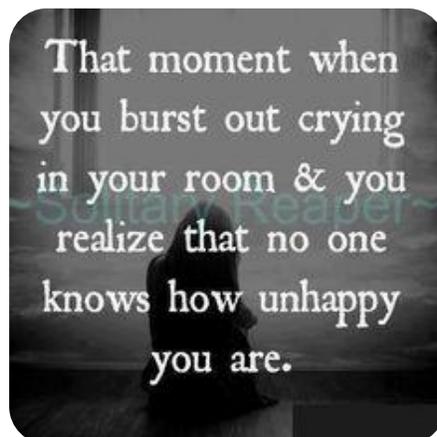
The researchers reviewed 23 papers and in total 181,006 patients. Outcomes of the study revealed a **29% increased risk for incident CHD** for those who had poor social connections, shown through loneliness and social-isolation measurements, compared with those with better connections. The lonely and isolated patients also had a **32% increased risk for Stroke.**

The investigators, led by Dr Nicole K Valtorta (University of York, UK), note that loneliness often contributes to impaired coping methods, isolation affects self-efficacy and both have been associated with decreased physical activity and increased smoking. They add that future studies are needed to assess whether targeting these social characteristics "can help to prevent two of the leading causes of death and disability in high-income countries." But for now, "health practitioners have an important role to play in acknowledging the importance of social relations to their patients."

In an accompanying editorial, Drs Julianne Holt-Lunstad and Timothy B Smith (both from Brigham Young University, Provo, USA) point out that the results "are consistent with substantial research indicating broad health risks" from poor quality and quantity of social connectivity.

"The cumulative evidence points to the benefit of including social factors in medical training and continuing education for healthcare professionals," write the editorialists. They add that just as cardiologists and other clinicians "have taken strong public stances" when it comes to other CVD-exacerbating factors, "further attention to social connections is needed in research and public-health surveillance, prevention, and intervention efforts."

REFERENCE: [http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/862370?src=wnl\\_edit\\_tpal&uac=190823BZ](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/862370?src=wnl_edit_tpal&uac=190823BZ)



## INTERESTING TRUE STORY

Article posted online - Spectator.co.uk-29 Apr 2016

### THE DAY I HAD A STROKE NO ONE COULD TELL ANYTHING WAS WRONG

Richard Heller describes his experience:

I first discovered I'd had a Stroke when I suddenly couldn't play the piano. My regular listeners would ask how I could tell. I am a lounge pianist who has made thousands of people head for another lounge. Seriously, I am not that bad — after 60 years with the aid of fake books I know how to pick out a good repertoire of popular melodies. Now, when I looked at the familiar album of easy favourites from the 1930s open on the stand, my hands refused to play any of the chords. Instead of being Over the Rainbow I was Dancing in the Dark.

A few other things seemed a bit off that day. Tasks that were normally routine, like grocery shopping, seemed to need extra thought and effort. So was keeping up my end of a conversation. But no one else noticed anything wrong, so I went ahead with a speaking engagement at the Stuckeridge Literary Festival in Devon. I felt unsteady, even lurching, when I walked anywhere and had to think carefully on a long flight of stairs. My two talks went well, even though I thought I had been slurred and rambling. Cautiously, I asked people (most of them perfect strangers) if I had seemed abnormal in any way. Not at all. Hmm. Maybe they think I am permanently drunk.

On my return home things seemed much worse. I went online and checked out symptoms. Slurred speech... tongue feels too big ... walking with difficulty ... all limbs feel floppy ... sudden memory lapses. **Yes, they all suggested a STROKE.**

Ridiculous. Strokes don't happen to people like me. All right, I'm over 65. But I gave up smoking when I left school. I drink only moderately even when someone else is paying. I have scarcely touched recreational drugs. I eat carefully. I have played cricket almost every week of the year, outdoors or in, for 60 years, and take a lot of other exercise. My body may not be a temple but it is a respectable chapel in regular use. Yes, I suffer sometimes from stress. I have been advised to relax. But, hell, everybody sometimes suffers from stress. I am certainly not over-stressed, and I'll fight anyone who says so. I was not a candidate for a Stroke. But I did feel odd enough to call for an ambulance.

They whizzed me to hospital where they immediately scanned my brain. They found one. They told me that they had seen no sign of a Stroke. They must have seen me bat for the last 60 years. They thought it might be a mystery virus, which has become code for 'we haven't got a clue'. They did an

echo cardiogram, twice. They said I had the heart of a 21-year-old man. I said: 'I know, and he wants it back.' I think they had heard it before. They shuttled me from bed to bed. The initial treatment for a Stroke seemed to consist of waking me up repeatedly and asking if I knew who and where I was. Richard Heller, in hospital, turned out to be the right answer every time. Then they did another scan and looked at all their findings more closely. They told me I had had a Stroke after all. It was a very minor one, more a push to midwicket than a straight drive to the boundary. But it was a genuine Stroke, affecting the area at the back of the brain which they explained as a sort of junction box for some key nerves, particularly those affecting speech and balance. However, they could not find a cause. They got excited when they found a clot inside the carotid artery in the neck. But then they looked deeper and decided there was no clot after all, 'just a layer of fur'. (Which sounds like a fashion statement rather than a diagnosis — 'arteries will be worn this year with a layer of fur'.) They gave me aspirin to thin the blood but there was no further medication and no surgical intervention. Treatment still consisted of asking for my name, but they added a new challenge: pilot my forefinger to my nose. Fortunately, I have a big landing area. A physiotherapist inspected my walking. It still felt wobbly, but now only mildly drunk instead of 3am on a Saturday. A speech therapist gave me some familiar tongue-twisters. I managed 'Five frantic frogs fleeing from a flotilla' but 'Seventy shivering sailors stood silently' was beyond me: they would have died of hypothermia by the time I finished that sentence. So words with 's' are out until further notice. I'll be fine if I just keep off the plurals.

Writing was a worry. My handwriting had become painfully slow and seriously dreadful. At first, I could not sign my name. I thought this might actually be useful in dealing with creditors, but the occupational therapist made me follow letters and shapes with a pen. I hadn't done this since nursery school. Keyboard speeds were slow too. She set me sentences I remembered from typing school. Quick brown foxes jumped again and again over the lazy dog, but so far to little effect. It still takes an age to type anything substantial. Maybe instead of writing articles I'll have to write jokes for Christmas crackers instead. After a few days of this they decided I could go home, although there are further tests and therapies to come as an outpatient. They still want to find a cause. They said I would be able eventually to do everything exactly as I did before. They really know how to depress a guy. Apart from keeping up the medication they recommended diet and lifestyle changes, principally not drinking alcohol. For how long? 'Only the rest of your life.' It's enough to drive anyone to drink. A repeat becomes more likely with any Stroke, so the key objective is to avoid having another Stroke, and then another one after that. It reminded me of the Speaking Clock: 'At the third Stroke, your time will be ... up.'

I went home. Since then, my life is all about discovering which faculties have stayed or gone or might be coming back. I rushed back to the piano. The same album of 1930s favourites was mockingly open. I found I could struggle through a few numbers, but painfully slowly. Pick Yourself Up sounded more like Pack Yourself Up, a funeral pavane, not Jerome Kern's polka for Fred Astaire

and Ginger Rogers. But my ironing skills were intact. So were my washing up skills, my vacuuming skills and my digging skills in the garden. Couldn't I have lost them ('It's terrible, doctor, he'll never manage a dustpan again') instead of the piano? They advised me at hospital to keep a diary of daily progress. I did for one day but now I've forgotten where it is. I am walking better but all movements are very slow. Billy Connolly has a wonderful line about turning 60: 'You bend down to tie up your shoelace, and you think "Is there anything else I can do while I'm down here?"' I have had a lot of Billy Connolly moments. I make lists of things to pick up before I hit the floor. It's amazing what you can find under the bed when you decide to give some proper time to the job. Not just the usual cough sweets and tissues and foreign coins and homeless socks but old board games and an old movie script I could not remember writing. It was pretty good. Then I discovered I didn't write it. I couldn't remember the actual writer at all. When did he send it to me? Did he still expect comments?

Things looked up over Easter weekend. I got through Easter Bunny duty with two grandsons (two and four), laying quite a long trail and then actually remembering where I had hidden their eggs. I am glad I didn't have to do Santa Claus: I'm not quite ready for all that ho ho ho-ing. I trapped a stray football and sent it quite a long way back to its owner. I conducted a conversation with a stranger and negotiated a lot of plurals. It was a case of my s is as good as yours. And I went back to the piano. I negotiated Jerome Kern's four tricky opening chords. Then the fiendish key change for the verse. 'My two feet haven't met yet...' How appropriate. Then at maybe two-thirds speed into the melody. My daughter-in-law paused to listen. Without looking at the music, she said: 'Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, start all over again.' Most gratifying.

REFERENCE: <http://health.spectator.co.uk/i-eat-well-and-play-cricket-every-week-so-how-did-i-have-a-Stroke>





## ON A LIGHTER NOTE ...

Submitted by: [Sheila Haydock](#)

### *TRUISMS*

- ② If I had a dollar for every girl that found me unattractive, they'd eventually find me attractive.
- ② I find it ironic that the colours red, white, and blue stand for freedom, until they're flashing behind you.
- ② Today a man knocked on my door and asked for a small donation towards the local swimming pool, so I gave him a glass of water.
- ② I changed my password to "incorrect" so whenever I forget it the computer will say, "Your password is incorrect."
- ② Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.
- ② I'm great at multi-tasking--I can waste time, be unproductive, and procrastinate all at once.
- ② If you can smile when things go wrong, you have someone in mind to blame.
- ② Never tell your problems to anyone, because 20 percent don't care and the other 80 percent are glad you have them.
- ② Doesn't expecting the unexpected mean that the unexpected is actually expected?
- ② I hate it when people use big words just to make themselves sound perspicacious.
- ② Hospitality is the art of making guests feel like they're at home when you wish they were.
- ② I bought a vacuum cleaner six months ago and so far all it's been doing is gathering dust.
- ② I'll bet you \$4,567 you can't guess how much I owe my bookie.
- ② Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.
- ② If you keep your feet firmly on the ground, you'll have trouble putting on your pants.
- ② A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kick boxing.

- Ⓢ Ever stop to think and forget to start again?
- Ⓢ When I married Ms. Right, I had no idea her first name was Always.
- Ⓢ There may be no excuse for laziness, but I'm still looking.
- Ⓢ Women spend more time wondering what men are thinking than men spend thinking.
- Ⓢ Give me ambiguity or give me something else.
- Ⓢ He who laughs last thinks slowest.
- Ⓢ Is it wrong that only one company makes the game Monopoly?
- Ⓢ Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
- Ⓢ The grass may be greener on the other side but at least you don't have to mow it.
- Ⓢ I like long walks, especially when they're taken by people who annoy me.
- Ⓢ I was going to wear my camouflage shirt today, but I couldn't find it.
- Ⓢ If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
- Ⓢ Sometimes I wake up grumpy; other times I let her sleep.
- Ⓢ If tomatoes are technically a fruit, is ketchup a smoothie?
- Ⓢ Money is the root of all wealth.
- Ⓢ No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
- Ⓢ I would give my right arm to be ambidextrous



Ministry for Education, Ireland  
Department for Learning  
Exam Sheet for

# A-Levels

Time allowed: 1 Minute

1. Continue this swquence in a logical way:	25 Points
<u>M</u> <u>T</u> <u>W</u> <u>T</u> _ _ _	
2. Correct this formula with a single stroke:	25 Points
5 + 5 + 5 = 550	
3. Please write anything here:	25 Points
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 400px;"></div>	
4. Draw a rectangle with 3 lines:	25 Points

Now, scroll down for the answers

# A-Levels

Time allowed: 1 Minute

1. Continue this swquence in a logical way:	25 Points
<u>M</u> <u>T</u> <u>W</u> <u>T</u> <u>F</u> <u>S</u> <u>S</u>	
Monday   Tuesday   Wednesday   Thursday   Friday   Saturday   Sunday	
2. Correct this fomula with a single stroke:	25 Points
5 4 5 + 5 = 550	
3. Please write anything here:	25 Points
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"><i>anything</i></div>	
4. Draw a rectangle with 3 lines:	25 Points
<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">   </div>	<a href="#">Help</a> 

You hang in there Sunshine... we didn't pass either...

Until next time  
Cheers  
Sandra & Sharlene

