



# News from REGARDS

## REasons for Geographic And Racial Differences in Stroke

Summer/Fall 2019

### One Size May Not Fit All in Stroke Prevention



Researchers already knew that stroke rates increase with age, that men have higher rates of strokes than women, and that blacks have higher rates of stroke than whites. A recent REGARDS study took this a step farther and looked at how stroke rates differed by age group in men and women separately, by race. In addition, we looked at how risk factors were related to these differences. In the age group 45-64, the highest stroke rates were in black men, followed by black women, white men and white women. For the 65-74 age group, black men and black women share the same high stroke rate, followed by white men, with white women having the lowest risk. In those 75 years of age and older, this pattern broke down, with whites having slightly higher rates than blacks. In all three age groups, the male/female stroke rates were not different by race. When we looked at risk factors, we found that high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease were related to higher stroke rate in white women compared to white men. For black REGARDS participants, there was no difference in stroke rate between men and women for any of these risk factors.

If you would like to contact our Operations Center, the toll-free number is:

**1-888-REGARDS8**  
(1-888-734-2738)

The Operations Center is open

Monday– Friday  
8:00am–5:00pm CDT.

If you reach our answering machine, please leave a message and we will return your call.

Visit us at  
**www.**

**uab.edu/soph/regardsstudy**

You can also email us at  
**regards@uab.edu**



### BREAKING NEWS!

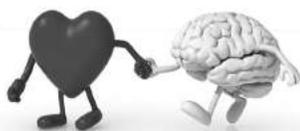
We have updated our web site! Please check out our new address and let us know what you think.

If there are resources and items you would like to see added to the web site, share them with us. Our site is designed with you in mind, so your opinions count.

We are continually working to enhance the website and make it interesting, helpful, and user friendly. Be sure to visit us for the latest updates and news from your friends at REGARDS.

**www.uab.edu/soph/  
regardsstudy**

### Controlling Blood Pressure May Help Prevent Cognitive Decline



Research has long shown that controlling blood pressure can help prevent strokes and heart attacks. Now, new research from another large, national study suggests another benefit.

Intensive blood pressure control may lower your chance of

developing mild cognitive impairment, a condition that sometimes arises before a person develops dementia. People who tried to get their blood pressure lower than 120 mmHg systolic over 80 mmHg diastolic were 19% less likely to develop mild cognitive impairment than those who targeted getting their blood pressure under 140/90. If your blood pressure is over 130/80, it is important to take steps to keep your blood pressure under control. The first steps are broad-based lifestyle changes including weight loss (if necessary), regular exercise, and a heart-healthy diet. Talk to your doctor about what blood pressure target goal makes sense for you.

## Participant Spotlight



Participant: **John B.**

Age: **86 years young**

Location: **US Northeast Region**

Time in REGARDS: **15 years**

Occupation: **Veteran and retired electrical engineer**

Mr. John B. has been a REGARDS participant since 2004. In his early years, John tended 20 acre gardens in California and served in the Coast Guard before his career as an electrical engineer. Today, he continues his active lifestyle, sharing wisdom and warmth with the REGARDS study team.

**What are your hobbies?** Bicycling and playing the piano. Playing the piano is a hobby that stems from my childhood... The musical gene also passed on to my children and grandchildren.

**What is your usual daily routine?** I have an apartment in a retirement community. I am very self-sufficient. My daily routine consists of making my bed, opening blinds, reading my devotional, preparing my meals, taking care of my orchids (I put ice on them once a week.) Unfortunately, my wife passed in Nov. 2018, prior to that I was her caregiver for 3 years.

**How would you describe your health and lifestyle?** I have a very healthy and active lifestyle. I live on the third floor and I NEVER take the elevators. I always take the stairs. I walk 2 to 3 miles a day every day. I bicycle and attend 45 minute long exercise classes 3 times a week. I am a strict vegetarian. I do not eat anything that is processed... I do not drink any caffeinated beverages. I've never smoked or consumed alcoholic beverages.

**What recent goals have you accomplished?** I have lost 20 pounds since November 2018. Another goal is to get a full 8 hours of sleep at night.

**Are you involved in any community activities?** Yes, I attend church weekly. I sing in a choir. I am an Ambassador and recruiter for our retirement community. I am a member of a men's dinner group called ROMA. Also, I am on the "Go Green" Committee promoting recycling.

**How has the REGARDS study benefitted you?** REGARDS has made me more health conscious. I am more intent with keeping up with regular doctor's visits.

**What message would you like to share with your fellow REGARDS participants?** Try my lifestyle. It keeps me happy. It keeps me healthy. It keeps me joyful. And it keeps me at peace.

**Any last words?** I have been in the study for over 10 years and I am very grateful for it. I think Dr. Howard is on to something. I want to see the study continue as long as possible.

## 5 WAYS to Make the Most of Your DOCTOR VISIT

Being able to **talk with your doctor** is important, especially if you have **health problems or concerns**.



Use these **TIPS** to make the most of your doctor visit.

**1 Prepare for your visit.**  
Be ready to ask three or four questions. Share your symptoms, medicines or vitamins, health habits, and any major life changes.



**2 Take notes or ask for written materials.**  
Don't be afraid to ask the doctor to repeat or clarify important information.



**3 Make decisions with your doctor that meet your needs.**  
Discuss risks, benefits, and costs of tests and treatments. Ask about other options and preventive things you can do.



**4 Be sure you are getting the message.**  
If you have trouble hearing, ask your doctor to face you when talking and to speak louder and more clearly.



**5 Tell the doctor if you feel rushed, worried, or uncomfortable.**  
You can offer to return for a second visit or follow up by phone or email.



Learn more about communicating with your doctor:

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/doctor-patient-communication>

