Development of a Community-Based Intervention for Stroke Survivors and their Family Caregivers

Carole L. White, PhD, RN, Lyda Arevalo, PhD, RN
School of Nursing, UTHSCSA

**Background:** Most organized efforts to improve the delivery of care for patients with stroke have focused on the hospitalized period with very little attention to improvements across the continuum of care, particularly in disadvantaged populations. The objective of this study was to explore with stroke survivors and their family caregivers their experience after discharge from hospital in order to identify avenues for improving care, including the role of telehealth in secondary stroke prevention.

**Methods:** This ongoing exploratory study is using data from focus groups with stroke survivors discharged from University and Baptist Health Systems in the past year and their family caregivers. All focus groups are audiotaped and the information from the tapes is transcribed. Given the diversity in responses to the study questions regarding post-stroke experiences, we are planning to conduct six focus groups. Two members of the research team are extracting the content from the groups, using established procedures of content analysis.

**Results:** Focus groups are underway, with data from four focus groups anticipated by early October. Preliminary themes include returning home without care being organized and the difficulty in accessing resources, inconsistent follow-up for secondary stroke prevention, and caregiver strain and the need for support. Although participants report being comfortable with some technology, not all own computers or cell phones. Some participants use home monitors to measure their blood pressure but do not regularly track the measurements. They also have not received any information on validated monitors or teaching on how to monitor their blood pressure.

**Conclusions:** Preliminary results suggest that there are unmet needs. The results from this study will inform the design of a community-based intervention for improving community-based care for stroke survivors and their family caregivers.