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### Core Measures Improve Health Outcomes in Stroke Patients

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# Core Measures Improve Health Outcomes in Stroke Patients

Katelyn Ponce, Student Nurse

## INTRODUCTION

“Core measures are national standards of care and treatment processes for common conditions. These processes are proven to reduce complications and lead to better patient outcomes” (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2022).

“A stroke occurs when the blood supply to the brain is blocked by a clot or tear in a blood vessel. There are two types of strokes: ischemic and hemorrhagic” (Stroke Awareness Foundation, n.d.).

Examples of core measures specific to stroke patients include: thrombolytic therapy within three hours of stroke symptoms, antithrombotic therapy within two days of hospital admission, venous thromboembolism prophylaxis, anticoagulation medications for patients who have atrial fibrillation, prescribed medications (antithrombotic therapy and statins) upon discharge, patient education regarding strokes, and assessment for rehabilitation needs prior to discharge (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2022).

## SIGNIFICANCE

According to the Stroke Awareness Foundation (n.d.),

- The annual occurrence of individuals in the United States that suffer a stroke are approximately 795,000 people.
- “Someone has a stroke every 40 seconds, and every 4 minutes someone dies from a stroke.”
- “There are over 7 million stroke survivors living in the United States and two-thirds of them are currently disabled.”
- Approximately 25% of first time stroke survivors will encounter a stroke again within the next five years.

## POSITION STATEMENT

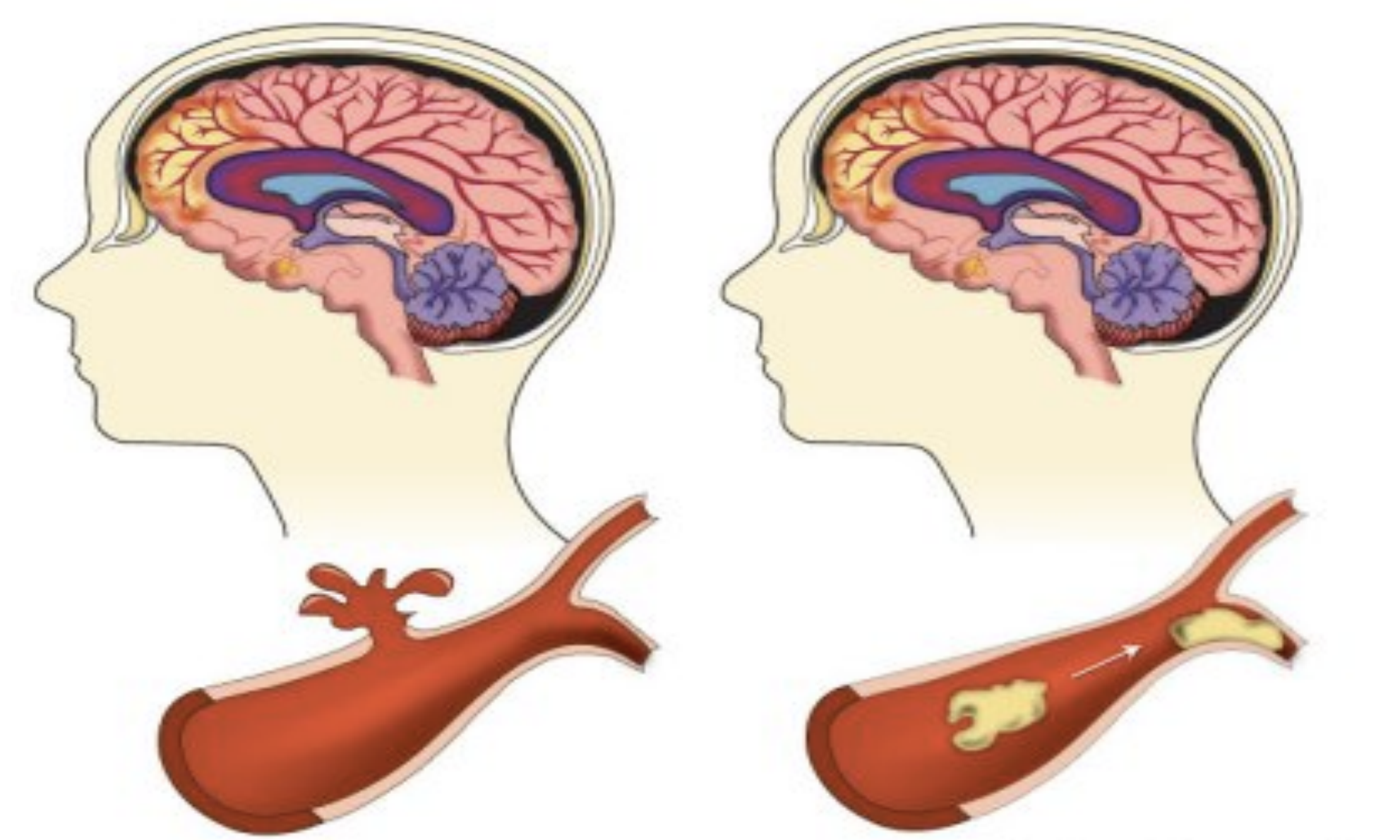
The implementation of core measures are beneficial for improving patient health outcomes regarding patients who suffer a stroke.

## SUPPORT FOR POSITION

“The core measure processes are proven standards of care that reduce complications and lead to better patient outcomes” (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2022).

Together, the Joint Commission and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services work to keep core measures up to date using evidenced-based information in addition to tracing the performance of core measures within hospital systems across the country to evaluate optimal effectiveness (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2022).

Core measures specific to stroke patients are considered both “timely and effective.” Medications administered improve mortality and morbidity in addition to helping prevent another occurrence of a stroke. Educating patients and their families results in better patient outcomes, and “early rehabilitation interventions initiated following a stroke can enhance the recovery process and minimize functional disability” (Mayo Clinic, 2021).



A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel bursts within the brain. An ischemic stroke occurs when a blood clot blocks the blood flow in an artery within the brain.

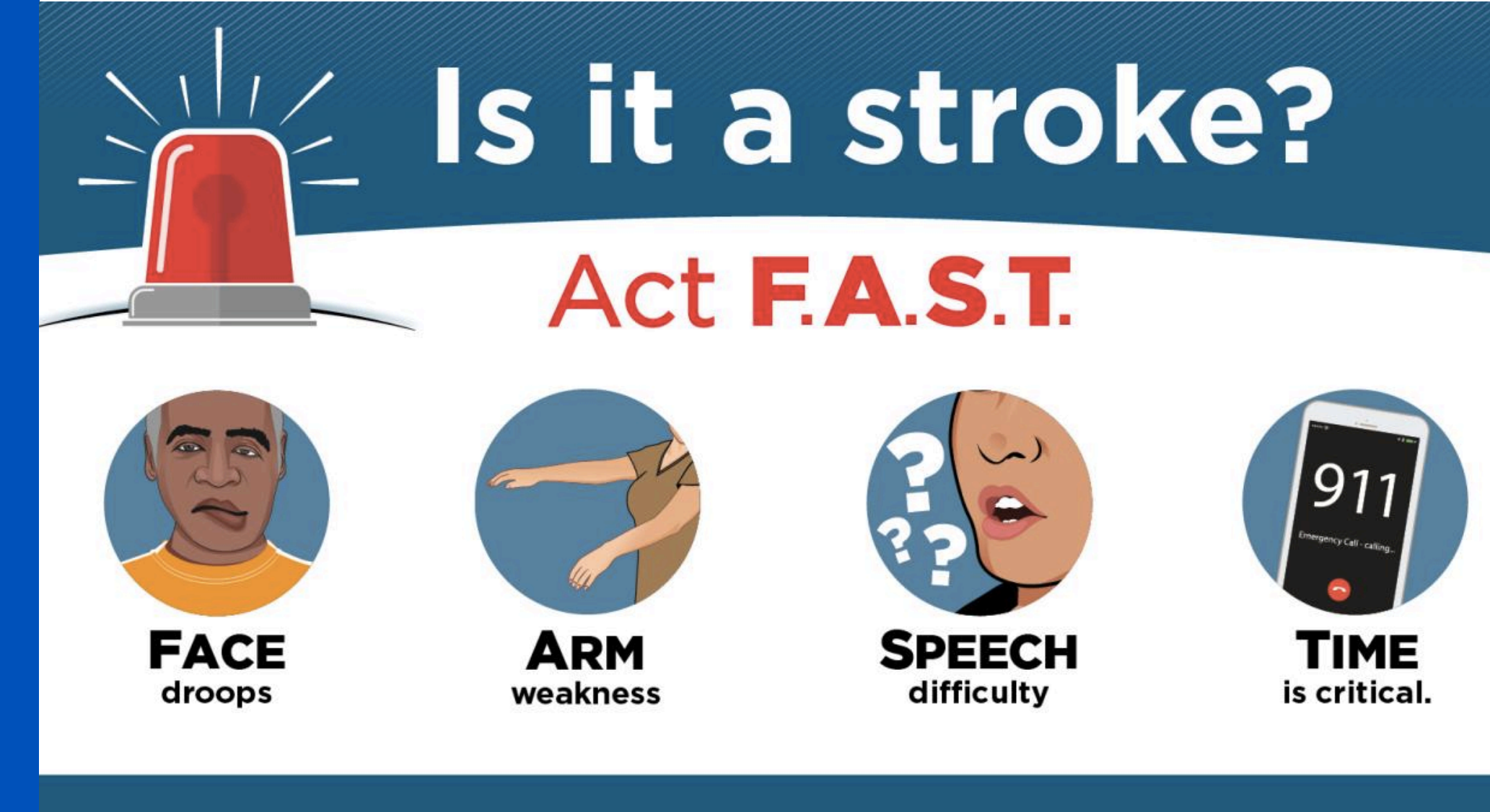
(Centers for Disease Control, 2021)

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

During the care of stroke patients, nurses should administer medications in a timely manner within the specified time range for optimal effectiveness. It is also important to implement prophylactic interventions to help decrease the risk for the formation of venous thromboembolisms. Nurses should assist the patient and the family with goal planning after a stroke to promote the best possible recovery and to improve impairments related to the stroke (Mayo Clinic, 2021).

Prior to discharge, nurses should provide patient education regarding strokes (risk factors, treatment, etc.), medications (proper administration, medication schedule for new medications, side effects, etc.), and changes in modifiable risk factors (diet, exercise, smoking cessation, etc.). They should also provide the patient and family with information regarding rehabilitation services and help to coordinate these services if necessary (Mayo Clinic, 2021).

“Through evidence-based practices, nurses can positively impact patient outcomes, decrease patient length of stay, costs and the likelihood of additional strokes” (American Heart Association, 2021).



(Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d.)

## CONCLUSION

Strokes are medical emergencies that affect many individuals every day. With the use of core measures, healthcare professionals are able to provide patients with effective interventions and treatments that work to improve patient outcomes. Nurses play a vital role during the implementation of core measures by providing care in a timely manner, evaluating effectiveness of interventions, and ensuring patient understanding of education. Through the implementation of these core measures, health outcomes are greatly improved in stroke patients.

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