Awareness of stroke is deficient among Lithuanian urban adults

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Introduction
Diseases of circulatory system are the principle cause of deaths in European countries. As Lithuania takes top positions of this unfavorable statistic for several years, we purposed to investigate public awareness of stroke warning signs and response to stroke onset. During 2013 in Lithuania more than 56.3% of deaths happen due to circulatory diseases. The majority of (86.1%) who died from cardiovascular disease were 65 years old and older individuals. However, most public participants often know very little or do not fully understand about the risk factors that influence these diseases to occur. Also key symptoms of which to seek specialized medical help when the time is one of the greater survival, disability curtailment indicators.

The aim
The aim of this study was to investigate public awareness of stroke warning signs and response to stroke onset. Also to compare knowledge about stroke symptoms on the basis of differences in socio-demographic factors, personal lifestyle habits and their health.

Methods
Questionnaire, provided by investigators, about stroke symptoms, action to take and time gap for effective treatment after stroke onset was determined via close-ended questions, offering multiple right and wrong answers. The correct answers about stroke warning signs were selected after combining data from recommendations from National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (Table 1).

Adults aged 25-65 years were surveyed at “Vilniaus Centro Poliklinika” primary health care centre during their regular doctor appointments in 2015. Additional demographic and personal medical history was collected. A total of 490 adults were surveyed. Responses from only (n=408) participants were included into final analysis.

Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 17.0. Demographic characteristics of the subjects and response rates to symptoms and were calculated. T-test and analysis of variance were used to examine the relationship between the demographic variables and knowledge scores of symptoms.

Results
The average age of participants in this study was 44.0±11.9 years. The majority of participants (53.2%) were women. A total of 57.8% participants had an university degree. A total of 39.2% participants smoked at the time of interview or were ex-smokers. About 26.7% had hypertension and 6.6 % had diabetes. A total of 40.2% had a family history of stroke and 39.2% had a family history of heart attack. The majority of participants (28.2%) had two CVD risk factors (Table 2 and 3).Knowledge of stroke symptoms was significantly higher among men than women (p=0.006) and participants of 34-44 age group (p=0.377). No difference found by education, self-reported risk factors and smoking history (Table 4).

Graph 1. Ability of survey participants to recognize stroke warning signs

Graph 2. First action which respondents choose to take if stroke warning signs occur

Graph 3. Time gap for effective stroke treatment chosen by study participants

Conclusions
Adequate response to stroke onset is principal component in time sensitive outcomes but it is not efficient among Lithuanian urban adults. Frequent adult know 4 or 5 stroke symptoms, almost all (83% respondents) would “call ambulance” at particular condition. A total of 25.4% (n=104) participants chose the right action and time gap for effective stroke treatment (Graph 2 and 3).

References