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**Press release**  
**For immediate publication**

**Stroke app: the smartphone as a health monitor**  
**New development assists young stroke patients in daily life**

Graz, 14 October 2021: Stroke patients are increasingly younger, which is a development driven forward by a more and more unhealthy lifestyle. Med Uni Graz scientists have developed an app that helps younger stroke patients integrate regular exercise and good nutrition into their daily lives and take their medication on time. This and many other science updates will be presented at the Styrian Brain Research Initiative symposium.

**Unhealthy lifestyle: Stroke patients are increasingly younger**

When most people think of the topic of strokes, it is likely that they first think of older people. "What is little known is that young adults can also be affected by severe strokes," says Christian Eninger, Med Uni Graz professor of neurology and chair of the Administrative Board of the Styrian Brain Research Initiative. Even in young people, strokes can lead to serious impairments that affect motor skills, language, processing of sensory information and thinking.

In fact, 15% of all stroke patients are under the age of 55 and this number is increasing at an alarming rate. Low levels of physical activity, an unhealthy diet, stress and tobacco consumption lead to typical risk factors for stroke such as being overweight, high blood pressure and diabetes. To reduce the risk of a further stroke after the first one has occurred, Med Uni Graz has developed an app that helps younger stroke patients to get their personal risk factors under control. "Like a personal trainer in your pocket, the app motivates you to lead a healthy lifestyle by giving you practical tips on how to get more exercise and have a healthier diet. It also provides reminders about taking medication and measuring blood pressure on time," explains Viktoria Fruhwirth of the Med Uni Graz Department of Neurology.

**New app developed: the smartphone as a health monitor**

A scientific study at the Med Uni Graz Department of Neurology has indicated the great potential of the app. "Three months after their stroke, younger stroke patients that used the app exercised nearly twice as much as non-users," summarizes Viktoria Fruhwirth. The app also had a positive effect on eating habits. This shows that specially developed apps are a promising method for helping younger stroke patients choose a healthy lifestyle.

The next step for the scientists working with Viktoria Fruhwirth is to validate the app in a larger study. "Since successful management of risk factors is also helpful in primary prevention and with other cardiovascular diseases, it is conceivable to widen it to other cohorts," says Fruhwirth, looking to the future.

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These and other research findings will be presented at the Styrian Brain Research Initiative symposium.

**INGE-St Symposium 2021  
Neuronal Plasticity—Support and Challenge Our Brain**

Time: Tuesday, 19 October 2021, 4 PM

Place: University of Graz, auditorium, Universitätsplatz 3, 8010 Graz

<https://gehirnforschung.at/>

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