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UPCOMING EVENTS



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DEALS AND FUNDING

Linux secures USD 70mn strategic investment from ChrysCapital and Tata Capital Healthcare Fund

Linux is a specialty-focused domestic formulations platform with a portfolio of over 125 brands spanning ~400 SKUs.

Pharma Express, 30th September 2026

Linux Laboratories, one of India's fastest-growing domestic formulations companies, has secured USD 70 million in equity capital from ChrysCapital and Tata Capital Healthcare Fund III ("TCHF III"). ChrysCapital has acquired a significant minority stake in Linux.

The transaction comprises a combination of primary capital and secondary purchase and includes the full exit of Tata Capital Healthcare Fund II ("TCHF II") at approximately 4x returns. Avendus Capital acted as the exclusive financial advisor to Linux on the transaction.

Founded in 2007 and headquartered in Chennai, Linux is a specialty-focused domestic formulations platform with a portfolio of over 125 brands spanning ~400 SKUs. Linux has established a leadership position in central nervous system (CNS) therapies, covering epilepsy, neuropathic pain, depression and autism, and has extended into dermatology, cardio-diabetics and nutraceuticals. Linux reaches over 60,000 doctors through a field force of more than 1,000 medical representatives across seven divisions, with a pan-India presence and a deliberate focus on specialists.

Linux has combined organic brand-building with a disciplined acquisition track record, having integrated and scaled the Biomedica and Indiabulls Pharmaceuticals portfolios alongside brands acquired from Cipla and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories. The Company also operates its own WHO-GMP certified manufacturing facility, which supports backward integration for the branded business while anchoring a growing contract development and manufacturing (CDMO) operation and an export presence across countries.

The proceeds will support Linux's next phase of growth, including deepening its presence in core specialties, entry into adjacent therapeutic areas, continued brand acquisitions, and further investment in manufacturing and R&D capabilities.

Linux secures USD 70mn strategic investment from ChrysCapital and Tata Capital Healthcare Fund - Express Pharma

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Ontario Contributes $1.7 Million Investment to Advance Life Sciences Innovation at Piramal Pharma's Aurora Facility

PR Newswire, 30th September 2026

Piramal Pharma Solutions ("PPS"), a leading global Contract Development and Manufacturing Organization (CDMO) and part of Piramal Pharma Ltd. ("PPL") (NSE: PPLPHARMA) (BSE: 543635), today announced that its Aurora, Canada drug substance site has received a $1,753,620 investment from the Ontario government through the Life Sciences Scale-Up Fund (LSSUF), enabling PPS to upgrade site infrastructure and commercialize Ontario-made health technologies for new markets.

- Piramal Pharma Solutions is investing over $5.3 million in its Aurora drug substance facility to upgrade site infrastructure.

- With its investment through the Life Sciences Scale-Up Fund, the Ontario government is supporting healthcare innovation and reinforcing its province's leadership position in the life sciences.

- This project will create 12 new jobs and protect 183 existing positions, unlocking new market opportunities and strengthening the sector's competitiveness.

With support from the government of Ontario, Piramal Pharma is investing $5,314,000 to upgrade site infrastructure at their Aurora facility, strengthening Ontario's pharmaceutical manufacturing and bolstering domestic production of APIs. This project will enhance R & D and clinical API production, ensure the commercial availability of critical drug substances, and support a resilient and globally competitive life sciences industry in Ontario. The investment will create 12 new jobs and protect 183 existing positions.

"We are grateful to the Government of Ontario and MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy for their support of this important investment in our Aurora facility," said Peter DeYoung, CEO, Piramal Global Pharma. "This funding will help enable Piramal Pharma Solutions to upgrade our site infrastructure, strengthen our manufacturing capabilities, and enhance our ability to serve patients and customers around the world. In addition to supporting business growth, this investment will help advance projects focused on sustainability, operational efficiency, and the modernization of our site, reinforcing our commitment to responsible manufacturing and environmental stewardship.

Ontario Contributes $1.7 Million Investment to Advance Life Sciences Innovation at Piramal Pharma's Aurora Facility

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Summit soars after $2 billion investment from AstraZeneca for cancer therapies

Reuters, 29th September 2026

Summit Therapeutics' (SMMT.O), shares rose 23% in premarket trading on Tuesday after the drugmaker said AstraZeneca (AZN.L), would invest $2 billion in the company to test cancer treatments together.

UK-listed shares of AstraZeneca were up 1.6% to a two-month high after the Anglo-Swedish company announced the deal late on Monday.

The investment is a validating buy-in for Summit from a global leader in cancer treatments, and offers it a much-needed cash infusion while retaining strategic options, Evercore ISI analyst Cory Kasimov said.

The companies will start testing AstraZeneca's experimental cancer treatment, sonesitatug vedotin, in combination with Summit's ivonescimab for certain gastrointestinal cancers.

Each company will retain development and commercial rights to their respective molecules, as part of the agreement.

Summit's ivonescimab works by simultaneously blocking two protiens: PD-1, which helps cancer evade the immune system, and VEGF, which tumors use to grow blood vessels.

Summit soars after $2 billion investment from AstraZeneca for cancer therapies | Reuters

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Novo adds long-term obesity differentiation in up to $2.6B Hengrui deal

Biospace, 29th September 2026

Investors looking for more transformative business development at Novo will have to wait, but a new partnership with China's Hengrui Pharma adds a new weekly oral option to the Danish pharma's early pipeline.

This isn't the deal investors were looking for. But Novo has a good feeling about China's Hengrui Pharma, signing a deal for a weekly oral peptide for obesity and other indications that could be worth up to $2.6 billion.

"HRS-1596 remains early, and the deal is unlikely to alter near-term competitive dynamics," BMO Capital Markets wrote on Tuesday morning. That said, "once-weekly oral dosing could provide some longer-term differentiation," the firm added.

Novo is paying $300 million upfront to license HRS-1596, a once-weekly GLP-1R/GIPR dual agonist that is ready for Phase 1, according to the pharma's Tuesday press release. The deal could reach $2.6 billion total for Hengrui depending on certain milestones plus royalties. Novo said the asset could be used in obesity, type 2 diabetes (T2D) and other metabolic diseases. The therapy has already been cleared in China for a Phase 1 study in weight management and T2D.

The peptide will fit in nicely with Novo's existing portfolio, which features oral semaglutide in both injectable and oral formulations for weight loss and diabetes.

Novo adds long-term obesity differentiation in up to $2.6B Hengrui deal - BioSpace

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Scynexis bags $214M BARDA contract for antifungal development

Fierce Biotech, 28th September 2026

The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) has awarded Scynexis a $214 million contract for the development of a treatment for invasive fungal infections.

The non-dilutive funding includes an initial payment of nearly $18.5 million to support the advancement of the oral and intravenous antifungal candidate (SCY-247) into a phase 2 trial. The contract has the option for extension for up to ten years and up to $214 million in funding to Scynexis, according to the release.

SCY-247 is a second-generation triterpenoid (fungerp) being developed to treat invasive candidiasis and the prevention of invasive fungal diseases. Invasive candidiasis is a serious fungal infection that occurs when *Candida* yeast enters the bloodstream and affects deep parts of the body, unlike common infections of the mouth or vagina.

In September 2025, Scynexis reported positive phase 1 data of orally dosed SCY-247 and currently has an ongoing phase 1 study of the intravenous formulation that completed dosing.

The structure and mechanism of action of fungerps offer some advantages over other antifungal classes like echinocandins. Scynexis is developing its fungerps to be both administered intravenously and orally, whereas echinocandins are only offered intravenously. Fungerps also offer deeper tissue penetration compared to echinocandins and a more favorable safety profile, according to the company.

Scynexis licensed its first fungerp to GSK after a tumultuous saga with the London-based company for a final payout of $22 million. Brexafemme was approved in 2021 for indications of vulvovaginal candidiasis and refractory vulvovaginal candidiasis.

Scynexis bags $214M BARDA contract for antifungal development

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PHARMA & BIOLOGICS

SMALL MOLECULES

US FDA approves Mirum's drug for rare bone disorder

Reuters, 25th September 2026

The US FDA on Friday approved Mirum Pharmaceuticals' (MIRM.O), pill for a rare bone disorder, offering patients a new treatment option that can help slow the disease's progression. The once-daily drug zilurgisertib, branded as Atebrioz, is approved for patients aged 12 years and older with fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva (FOP), which causes muscles, tendons and ligaments to gradually transform into bone, restricting movement and leading to severe disability.

Atebrioz blocks ALK2, a protein that is abnormally active in most patients with FOP and drives bone formation outside the skeleton. The recommended dose is 100 milligrams. FOP is typically diagnosed in early childhood. About 300 people in the US and 900 worldwide, according to Mirum, have the condition. Mirum expects to launch the drug in October and plans to announce its price at the launch, CEO Chris Peetz told Reuters.

"It is a game-changer for patients to have a medicine like this that can really stop that progressive, endless accumulation of bone," Peetz said. Citizens analyst Jonathan Wolleben estimates Atebrioz could cost about $750,000 annually and generate roughly $150 million in peak worldwide sales. Mirum had licensed the drug from Incyte earlier this year for $16 million upfront, along with potential milestone payments and sales royalties. The approval by the US Food and Drug Administration was based on a 63-patient study, in which Atebrioz significantly cut new bone formation compared to placebo at week 24.

Current treatment options for FOP include Ipsen's (IPN.PA), oral drug Sohonos and Regeneron's (REGN.O), Pasatru, a monthly infusion. Sohonos is approved for certain children and adults, while Pasatru is approved for adults.

US FDA approves Mirum's drug for rare bone disorder

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LARGE MOLECULES

Lilly sets up next-gen obesity battle with full phase 3 retatrutide data

Fierce Biotech, 30th September 2026

Eli Lilly has shared detailed data from a phase 3 retatrutide trial, revealing that more than one-third of patients on the top dose of the triple-G drug candidate lost at least 25% of their body weight.

Lilly reported topline data from the trial, Triumph-2, in July. The drugmaker shared a detailed look at the data on Tuesday at the Annual Meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) in Milan and in The Lancet. This week's update provides a fuller picture of how 1,152 adults with obesity and Type 2 diabetes responded to retatrutide, an agonist of GIP, GLP-1 and glucagon receptors.

As previously reported, mean weight loss on the top, 12 mg dose was 20.8% at Week 80, versus a 4% dip on placebo. The fall in A1C from a baseline of 7.7% was 1.4% to 1.6% across the three retatrutide doses, compared to 0.2% for placebo. Lilly saw no dose-dependent effect on A1C, a measure of blood sugar. The analyses cover patients who stayed on treatment without starting prohibited weight-management drugs.

Lilly's latest update provides details beyond the topline primary and secondary endpoints. In the 12 mg arm, 34.9% of patients lost at least 25% of their body weight. Fifty-two percent of patients lost at least 20% of their body weight. More than half of the patients no longer met the BMI criteria for obesity.

The results further differentiate retatrutide from tirzepatide, the market-leading GIP/GLP-1 drug that Lilly sells as Mounjaro and Zepbound. At Week 72 of a phase 3 trial, 34% of people receiving tirzepatide lost at least 20% of their body weight. Lilly didn't include the proportion of patients who lost 25% of their body weight in the tirzepatide readout.

While retatrutide has reset the bar on weight loss, the expanded dataset adds to evidence that the drug candidate has a more modest effect on blood sugar. On the middle and top doses, 40% and 39.3%, respectively, of patients had A1C levels below 5.7%, putting them in the healthy range. In an earlier trial, up to 55.3% of patients receiving tirzepatide had A1C levels below 5.7%.

https://www.fiercebiotech.com/biotech/eli-lilly-sets-next-gen-obesity-battle-full-phase-3-retatrutide-data

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The Oral GLP-1 Tracker: Prescriptions bounce back from holiday lull

Fierce Pharma, 25th September 2026

With the recent launches of Novo Nordisk's Wegovy pill and Eli Lilly's Foundayo, the obesity market has started to shift toward oral GLP-1 drugs. While Novo leverages its first-mover advantage with the familiar Wegovy brand, Lilly is betting that the freedom from strict fasting and water requirements can give Foundayo an edge.

Each week, Fierce Pharma's Oral GLP-1 Tracker will leverage analysts' notes and IQVIA data to monitor prescription trends and shifting market shares as these two titans vie to become the go-to oral weight-loss solution for millions.

Total prescriptions for both Eli Lilly's Foundayo and Novo's Wegovy pill have bounced back following a holiday dip and reached new records. Weekly scripts for the Wegov pill jumped 14% sequentially to about 184K, compared with its previous high of 183K, according to IQVIA data cited by Citi. Foundayo climbed 13% to cross 50K for the first time, reaching 53,321.

Foundayo now captures about 1 out of 3 new starts for oral GLP-1 obesity drugs, and "that's growing week over week," Lilly CEO David Ricks told CNBC in an interview this week.

As Leerink Partners analysts noted in a Sept. 23 note, effective Sept. 1, Lilly cut the initial-dose pricing for Foundayo 0.8 mg, 2.5 mg and 5.5 mg to $149, $149 and $199 per month for self-pay patients, respectively. The company framed the promotion as an elasticity experiment and as a push to the first maintenance dose, according to the Leerink note.

https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/oral-glp-1-tracker-launch-trajectories-lilly-foundayo-novo-wegovy-pill

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AbbVie Partners with Valkai to Apply Advanced AI Across Targeted Areas of Clinical Development

PR Newswire, 29th September 2026

- *AbbVie deepens investment in artificial intelligence (AI) by entering into a new collaboration with Valkai to strengthen integrated AI capabilities across clinical development*
- *AbbVie is committed to integrating AI throughout the drug development journey to advance scientific innovation, strengthen operations and improve outcomes for*

patients

AbbVie (NYSE: ABBV) is investing in its artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure through a new partnership with Valkai, a life sciences AI platform designed to help accelerate the pace at which scientific innovation reaches patients.

Through its partnership with Valkai, AbbVie will deploy purpose-built AI capabilities designed to improve efficiency across targeted areas of clinical research, help teams generate insights more quickly and support opportunities to reduce development timelines.

AI plays an important role at AbbVie in advancing scientific innovation, strengthening connected operations and improving how medicines are discovered, developed and delivered to patients. Its partnership with Valkai builds on AbbVie's strong foundation of applying AI across R&D, helping to further scale data-driven insights and innovation.

"At AbbVie, we are focused on applying AI where it can create meaningful impact for our business and, ultimately, for patients," said Nicholas Donoghoe, executive vice president, chief business and strategy officer, AbbVie.

https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/abbvie-partners-with-valkai-to-apply-advanced-ai-across-targeted-areas-of-clinical-development-302890641.html

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UniQure crashes as Huntington's gene therapy shows less slowing of disease at 4 years

Biospace, 29th September 2026

The results are nevertheless "unprecedented," UniQure executives said on an investor call Tuesday, emphasizing that the updated natural history database used as the control group for the Phase 1/2 study of AMT-130 underestimates disease progression.

UniQure's stock price plunged nearly 40% Tuesday morning as highly anticipated four-year data from its Huntington's disease gene therapy showed a less impressive disease slowing as compared with results from a year ago.

In the Phase 1/2 trial, 12 patients who received the highest dose of AMT-130—also called ifezuntirgene inilparvovec—saw a 44% slowing of disease progression after 48 months, a non-significant difference from natural history controls, uniQure said in its Tuesday announcement. This is notably less than the 75% three-year slowing of disease reported by uniQure in September 2025.

The biotech's stock fell by as much as 38% to $24.11 per share an hour after the market opened Tuesday.

Still, uniQure executives were positive on the gene therapy as they await word from the FDA on the biologics license application (BLA) it submitted earlier this month. While this missed the four-year analysis' primary endpoint of slowing disease progression on the composite Unified Huntington's Disease Rating Scale (cUHDRS), total functional capacity (TFC) for treated patients was 61% at four years, which was significantly better than controls.

UniQure Chief Medical Officer Walid Abi-Saab noted in the release that TFC is the primary outcome in the company's planned confirmatory study of the gene therapy, and executives emphasized on an investor call Tuesday that this metric is most reflective of quality of life for people with Huntington's.

https://www.biospace.com/drug-development/uniqure-crashes-as-huntingtons-gene-therapy-shows-less-slowing-of-disease-at-4-years

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REGULATORS AND REGULATORY ACTIONS

Unichem Laboratories USFDA Inspection At Goa Facility Concludes With 5 Procedural Observations

Unichem Laboratories' Goa formulation facility underwent a USFDA audit from September 21 to September 26, 2026. The regulatory sweep concluded with five minor observations regarding procedural upgrades. There are no data integrity or product quality findings, and the company is preparing its official remediation report to be submitted within 15 days.

Sahi, 28th September 2026

Market snapshot: Unichem Laboratories announced that the United States Food and Drug Administration completed an inspection at its Goa formulation facility in Pilerne, Bardez. The six-day audit ended with five observations categorized as procedural enhancements. The company has confirmed its plan to provide a detailed response to the regulator within the standard 15-day timeline.

Data Snapshot

- The Goa Formulation facility inspection was conducted from September 21 to September 26, 2026, ending with 5 procedural observations.

- Unichem reported a consolidated net profit of ₹41.47 crore in Q1 FY27, showing a major financial turnaround from a consolidated loss of ₹10.47 crore in Q1 FY26.
- Consolidated operational revenue jumped 20.13% year-on-year to ₹632.62 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2026, up from ₹526.6 crore.

What's Changed

- The Goa formulation unit successfully avoided serious data integrity findings during its latest inspection, maintaining its active export status.
- Unichem transitioned to a solid consolidated net profit of ₹41.47 crore compared to a loss of ₹10.47 crore in the prior year's corresponding quarter.
- The EBITDA margin more than doubled to 11% in Q1 FY27 from 4.3% in Q1 FY26, highlighting improved operating leverage.

Key Takeaways

- The six-day USFDA inspection concluded on September 26, 2026, with only minor procedural findings.
- A clean record on data integrity minimizes the risk of a warning letter or import ban on the Goa formulation facility.
- The company's standard 15-day window to respond demonstrates immediate compliance and proactive remediation actions.
- The facility is situated at Pilerne, Bardez, in Goa and serves as a crucial formulation plant for international markets.

https://www.sahi.com/news/unichem-laboratories-usfda-inspection-at-goa-facility-concludes-with-5-procedural-observations

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Zydus Lifesciences USFDA Inspection At SEZ II Ahmedabad Concludes With 1 Observation

Zydus Lifesciences' formulation facility in SEZ II, Ahmedabad, cleared a week-long USFDA cGMP audit with only one minor observation and no data integrity findings. The company will address the observation expeditiously, maintaining an overall robust compliance posture.

Sahi, 29th September 2026

Market snapshot: Zydus Lifesciences Limited has announced that the USFDA completed a current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP) inspection at its formulation plant in SEZ II, Ahmedabad. The regulatory audit concluded with a single observation and registered zero data integrity issues. This clean regulatory compliance outcome clears major hurdles for the facility's upcoming product approvals.

Data Snapshot

- The USFDA cGMP inspection conducted from September 21 to September 28, 2026, closed with exactly one observation and zero data integrity issues.
- Zydus reported consolidated operational revenue of ₹8,017 crore for Q1 FY27, which represents a 22% year-on-year growth.
- The company's consolidated net profit for Q1 FY27 declined by 35.9% year-on-year to ₹939.8 crore, down from ₹1,466.8 crore in Q1 FY26.

What's Changed

- Q1 FY27 operational revenue rose to ₹8,017 crore, up 22% YoY compared to ₹6,573.7 crore in Q1 FY26.
- Consolidated Q1 FY27 net profit fell by 35.9% YoY to ₹939.8 crore, down from ₹1,466.8 crore in the prior year's corresponding quarter due to margin pressures.

Key Takeaways

- The USFDA conducted its cGMP inspection of the SEZ II Ahmedabad plant from September 21 to September 28, 2026.
- The audit resulted in only one observation, with zero findings pertaining to data integrity.
- A clean record on data integrity is a major positive, as it minimizes the risk of severe regulatory actions like warning letters or import alerts.
- The company has committed to working closely with the US regulator to address and remediate the single observation expeditiously.

https://www.sahi.com/news/zydus-lifesciences-usfda-inspection-at-sez-ii-ahmedabad-concludes-with-1-observation

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MEDTECH

Abbott launches Freenome's colorectal cancer screening test

Medtech Dive, 30th September 2026

Dive Brief:

- Abbott said Wednesday it is launching Freenome's SimpleScreen CRC blood-based test for colorectal cancer in the U.S. as an option for people who decline to complete medical guideline-recommended screening.
- SimpleScreen CRC is an addition to the Cologuard Plus stool-based test in Abbott's colorectal cancer screening portfolio. Abbott acquired Cologuard in March in the $21 billion buyout of Exact Sciences.
- Freenome developed the SimpleScreen test and manufactures it. Abbott will distribute SimpleScreen in the U.S. under a commercial agreement with Freenome. The test, which won Food and Drug Administration approval this summer, will compete in the market with Guardant Health's Shield blood test for colorectal cancer screening.

Dive Insight:

The American Cancer Society recommends blood-based tests as a colorectal screening option only for people who are resistant to undergoing a colonoscopy procedure or taking a stool test. Visual exams and stool-based tests are the preferred screening options. The SimpleScreen test uses circulating cell-free DNA from a blood draw to detect signals associated with colorectal cancer. The test is approved to screen adults age 45 and older who are at average risk for the disease.

Abbott launches Freenome's colorectal cancer screening test

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FDA issues draft guidance for surgical robots

Medtech Dive, 28th September 2026

Dive Brief:

- The Food and Drug Administration last week released a draft guidance document spelling out what the agency wants to see in premarket submissions for robotically assisted surgical devices.

- The 50-page document details criteria for system stability and latency, instrument motion and position control, visualization, software, wireless technology, cybersecurity, sterilization, clinical data, labeling, training and more.
- The agency also said it will hold a two-day public workshop on Dec. 2-3 focused on evaluating the benefits and risks of robotic medical devices with autonomous or remote teleoperation capabilities.

Dive Insight:

The FDA's draft guidance comes as a steady stream of new robotic surgery systems enters the marketplace, many to compete with longtime leader Intuitive. The agency's upcoming workshop on robotic devices with remote teleoperation capabilities signals that telesurgery is on the FDA's radar as more remote procedures are performed globally. The FDA defines surgical robots as teleoperated, software-controlled systems that have technologies and subassemblies designed to assist clinicians in using instruments to perform open, minimally invasive or endoluminal procedures. Robotic technologies may contain some level of automated functions, the agency said.

Evercore ISI analysts, in a research note, called the draft guidance a positive for the industry because it lays out a specific pathway for FDA approval, compared with a "prior framework that had some ambiguity." Without a standardized framework, software and cybersecurity in particular can become hurdles, they noted.

FDA issues draft guidance for surgical robots

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INTERESTING MEDICAL NEWS

Stroke rates are falling overall but rising among adults under 55

Medical News Today, 29th September 2026

- Compared to what data from 27 years ago indicates, while cases of stroke are, overall, declining in the United States, younger adults are now more likely to experience these cardiovascular events.
- According to a large U.S. population study, adults aged 20 to 54 years are nearly twice as likely to experience a stroke compared to adults in the same age bracket 27 years ago.
- The most common type of stroke among these younger populations is ischemic stroke, the study also found.

A research team led by scientists at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, recently set out to analyze stroke incidence data to see how trends in these cardiovascular events have evolved over time and published their findings in the journal Neurology.

The team examined stroke cases requiring hospitalization in the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky region across six time periods: July 1993–June 1994, and the calendar years of 1999, 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2020.

Previous findings indicated that the overall incidence of stroke cases had declined over the 27-year study period. However, the current analysis suggested that strokes had actually become more common among younger adult populations, ages 20 to 54.

Specifically, they noted an increase from 33.9 cases per 100,000 person-years in 1993-1994 to 62.2 cases per 100,000 person-years in 2020 among these younger populations.

Most of the stroke cases among younger adults, the researchers also noted, were of ischemic stroke, whose rates increased from 23.8 cases per 100,000 person-years in 1993-1994 to 47.3 cases per 100,000 person-years in 2020.

Speaking to *Medical News Today*, David Robinson, MD, assistant professor in the Department of Neurology and Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Cincinnati, who is the senior author of the study, explained:

"We have a long-running research study in the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky region that has been monitoring the burden of stroke in the United States since 1988. We have observed clear declines in the overall number of people who experience strokes, which is a great testament to all the public health efforts that have targeted prevention of this disease and should be celebrated; however, even as the total number declined, the people who were having strokes were getting younger and younger."

"We wanted to understand why that was happening," Robinson told us. "At the same time, data from death certificates in the United States suggested that stroke was more commonly being listed as a cause of death in younger people."

"Death certificate data is really hard to interpret," he pointed out. "More deaths with stroke listed as the cause can be the result of stroke becoming more common, or it can reflect changes in how physicians fill the certificates out, or it can be related to a higher proportion of more severe strokes leading to death."

"Our study [was] able to look at younger individuals with stroke in a more granular way over a very long period of time. We also felt that any changes in this age group were really important to study in general. Stroke is devastating at any age, but it is particularly

challenging in younger people since they are still in their prime working years and may have young families to care for," said the researcher.

Why has stroke become more common among younger adults?

"There may not be one simple explanation why strokes are rising in young individuals," said Robinson.

According to him, "there is no doubt that several 'traditional' stroke risk factors are rising in younger adults, including high blood pressure and diabetes, and we saw that in our study population as well."

"High blood pressure has one of the closest relationships with stroke of any risk factor, so this could be part of the story," he noted. Nevertheless, the study author hypothesized that there are more factors at play here:

"It's well known that obesity and sedentary lifestyles have become dramatically more common over the last 3 decades, and this could certainly contribute to what we saw. We also noted a much higher rate of illicit substance use in our population over time, with the most common substance being marijuana [cannabis]. There is some evidence that marijuana use can increase your risk of stroke, but it remains unclear whether it is a strong enough independent risk factor to explain the rising burden we observed."

"All of these factors will need to be studied in more depth," he told us.

Walavan Sivakumar, MD, a board certified neurosurgeon, director of neurosurgery, and chief of staff at Providence Little Company of Mary in Torrance, CA, who was not involved in this study, advanced a similar hypothesis about the findings.

Like Robinson, Sivakumar believes that "the increase in stroke among younger adults is likely multifactorial." He also noted that "the study points to a concerning rise in traditional cardiovascular risk factors, including hypertension, diabetes, and atrial fibrillation."

"These conditions are increasingly being diagnosed in younger adults and can significantly increase stroke risk," the neurosurgeon explained.

He also expressed concern about the apparent rise in cannabis use and potentially that of illicit stimulant drugs among younger populations.

"While this association does not prove that marijuana itself causes stroke, it is a pattern that warrants further investigation, particularly when combined with stimulant use such as cocaine or methamphetamine, which have much stronger and more established associations with stroke," he told *MNT*.

What can younger adults do to lower their stroke risk?

Speaking of what individuals can do to decrease their risk of stroke, Robinson advised following the American Heart Association (AHA)'s "Life's Essential 8" guidelines, "specifically, controlling blood pressure, avoiding tobacco use, eating better, sleeping better, controlling blood sugar, controlling cholesterol, managing weight, and being as active as possible."

"Addressing these issues can not only reduce your risk of a stroke in the near term, but can go along way toward keeping you healthy once you get older," Robinson explained.

"Prevention really is the best tool that we have. If I were to recommend one thing, it would be to look for opportunities to screen for high blood pressure, which is often asymptomatic early on and can do a lot of damage before you are diagnosed," the study author concluded.

Sivakumar concurred, noting that "adults should have their blood pressure and blood sugar checked regularly and work with their physicians to address abnormalities rather than assuming they are too young to be at risk."

Early signs of stroke

"People who experience palpitations or have other risk factors or a family history of heart rhythm disorders should discuss whether evaluation for an irregular heart rhythm, such as atrial fibrillation, is appropriate. It is also important to be candid with your physician about substance use, including marijuana and stimulants, so that it can be considered as part of your overall risk profile."

— Walavan Sivakumar, MD

"Finally, everyone should know the warning signs of stroke, including sudden facial drooping, arm weakness, or difficulty speaking," stressed the neurosurgeon. "These symptoms require immediate medical attention regardless of a person's age. Rapid treatment can save brain function and improve outcomes."

Stroke research: Where to next?

Like Robinson, Sivakumar expressed that the current study suggests there is dire need of further research to confirm why exactly cardiovascular risk factors "are becoming more prevalent in younger adults and how strongly each factor contributes to stroke risk."

"It would also be valuable to investigate the increasing incidence of atrial fibrillation and cardioembolic stroke in younger adults," he noted.

"Understanding whether earlier screening for cardiovascular risk factors or heart rhythm abnormalities could identify people at increased risk before they experience a stroke could have important implications for prevention," Sivakumar explained.

Furthermore, the neurosurgeon commented that longer-term studies should examine whether earlier intervention targeting key modifiable risk factors "can reverse these trends."

"The fact that stroke survival is improving is encouraging, but preventing strokes in the first place, particularly among younger adults, should remain a major goal," he stressed.

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