

## Primary Prevention of Ischemic Stroke

To the Editor:

In the American Heart Association's Scientific Statement on the Primary Prevention of Ischemic Stroke,<sup>1</sup> the committee did not mention an important predisposing cause of stroke, namely aortic arch atherosclerosis, except to say that it is a cause of stroke during heart surgery. This pathological condition is an independent risk factor for stroke,<sup>2</sup> with a prevalence on the same order of magnitude as that of carotid stenosis and atrial fibrillation in consecutive series of patients with spontaneous strokes.<sup>2,3</sup> This important risk factor for stroke should be added to the otherwise comprehensive list presented by the Committee.

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2. Jones EF, Kalman JM, Calafiore P, et al. Proximal aortic atheroma: an independent risk factor for cerebral ischemia. *Stroke*. 1995;26:218–224.
3. Amarenco P, Cohen A, Tzourio C, et al. Atherosclerotic disease of the aortic arch and the risk of ischemic stroke. *N Engl J Med*. 1994;331:1474–1479.

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