Atrial Fibrillation, also known as AFib, is the most common heart arrhythmia, affecting more than 2.7 million people in the United States, and is a major risk factor for stroke. AFib is a type of irregular heartbeat, characterized by unpredictable, sometimes rapid, beating of the two upper chambers of the heart (atria). AFib can allow blood to pool in the upper chambers of the heart and potentially form a clot, which can travel to a person’s brain and cause a stroke.

The risk of stroke is increased four-to-five-fold in patients with AFib.

The Heart Rhythm Society (HRS) and National Stroke Association, in collaboration with Boehringer Ingelheim (BI), fielded a new survey of more than 1,200 respondents to evaluate the impact of AFib and stroke on patients and caregivers, and the concurrent perceptions physicians have about treatment options and their patients’ understanding of issues surrounding the condition.

More than 2 in 3 AFib patients surveyed were not previously aware that AFib-related strokes are nearly twice as likely to be fatal or disabling as non-AFib-related strokes.

5 in 6 stroke survivors surveyed wish they had known more about reducing the risk of AFib-related stroke prior to experiencing a stroke.

Approximately half of caregivers surveyed believed AFib caused an increased risk of stroke prior to the person in their care experiencing a stroke.

It is important to know how to recognize and respond to AFib and stroke signs and symptoms. More information and resources for understanding and preventing AFib-related strokes are available at www.MyAFib.org and www.Stroke.org/afib-stroke.