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# Clot removal saves brain function

**GRABBING** and removing a clot blocking blood flow to the brain, rather than just administering clot-busting drugs, dramatically improves the likelihood that patients will recover from a stroke, according to two highly-anticipated studies released recently.

The larger of the studies found that the procedure nearly halved the death rate from stroke.

Because three previous studies had failed to show a benefit from procedures employing clot-removing devices, the latest research should renew interest in the devices and are likely to change stroke treatment, experts said.

The two studies used devices made

by Covidien, which was acquired by Medtronic PLC last month and helped pay for one of the trials. Stryker Corp. and privately-held Penumbra Inc. also manufacture devices approved for clot removal.

The research echoes a large Dutch study published in December, called MR. CLEAN, that also found a benefit from fishing a clot out of an artery. Taken together, they offer "a really persuasive signal that we're on to something," said Dr. Patrick Lyden, director of the Stroke Programme at Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre in Los Angeles, told **Reuters** who was not involved in the studies.