OBJECTIVE: To evaluate the functional capacity of elders with encephalic vascular accident (EVA) and to examine the association between sociodemographic variables and functional capacity. METHODS: Interviews with 44 elders who had EVA were conducted during their assessment and treatment in the data collection settings. The instrument contemplated clinical and social-demographic variables. Functional Independence Measure (FIM) was used to measure the subjects' functional capacity. RESULTS: Most subjects were between 60 and 69 years of age. The MIF had good internal consistency reliability estimate. Subjects had a mean score of 97.0 on FIM. Mann-Whitney test indicated that participants who had access to health care services had higher FIM scores than individuals without health care access. Pearson's correlation analysis indicated a significantly negative correlation coefficient between age and FIM score. CONCLUSION: Encephalic vascular accident is associated with alterations in functional capacity of the sample of this study. This finding suggests the need for the use of effective rehabilitation strategies to help individuals who have decreased functional capacity due to normal aging and/or sequela to encephalic vascular accident.