World Stroke Day - Making the Fight Against Stroke a Global Health Priority

Language English



Geneva | 29 October 2011 – Today is World Stroke Day. There are 15 million people who have a stroke each year. Every other second, an adult or a child, a man or a woman, old or young, suffers a stroke. In fact, every six seconds, someone somewhere will die from a stroke. Stroke claims the lives of nearly six million people each year. It is the second leading cause of death for people above the age of 60, and the fifth for people aged 15 to 59. Stroke is the principal cause of long-term disability irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity or country.

It is responsible for more deaths annually than those attributed to AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria put together. “The global burden of stroke has reached epidemic proportions and the situation will not improve until strong actions are taken” WSO president Bo Norrving passionately implores. The World Stroke Organization (WSO) stands in solidarity with patients, stroke survivors and their loved ones, most especially today – World Stroke Day. The international body is asking its members around the world to exert pressure on their governments to enact targeted policies that would put the fight against stroke higher-up on national public health agendas.

As Prof. Norrving explains “recent stroke facts remain grim: there are few signs pointing to a decline in the incidence of strokes. Stroke risk facts remain undermanaged globally.” In the second year of its “1 in 6” campaign, the WSO is intensifying its efforts on educating and raising the consciousness of the general public about stroke. The theme “1 in 6” was aptly selected by WSO leadership to reflect the reality that one in six people will have a stroke in their lifetime.

The key messages of the campaign are simple:

• Stroke can be prevented

• Stroke can be treated

• Stroke can be managed in the long-term

As Prof. Norrving underscores “these messages may sound simple, but they are powerful. We need to use this powerful simplicity to improve public health for stroke.” With a single-minded purpose of eliminating stroke, WSO leaders this year, have proactively been lobbying key opinion leaders, heads of state, and health policy experts to pay

closer attention to the disease.

WSO was invited and participated at several landmark events in 2011 including the first Russian Ministerial Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) and Healthy Lifestyles in Moscow, the historic United Nations High Level Meeting on NCD Prevention and Control in New York, and recently this month, the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health, held in Rio de Janeiro. “In 2011, three-quarters of all individuals that have suffered from a stroke live in resource-constrained countries where health systems are already challenged to the limit” says Prof. Markku Kaste, the chair of the Campaign. “We must act now before it is too late”, he adds.

More information about the World Stroke Campaign at www.worldstrokecampaign.org [1]

About the World Stroke Organization

The World Stroke Organization (WSO) was established in October 2006. Its mission is to provide access to stroke care, promote research and knowledge by (1) promoting prevention and care for persons with stroke and vascular dementia; (2) fostering the best standards of practice; (3) educating, in collaboration with other international, public, and private organizations; and (4) facilitating clinical research. With individual and organizational members worldwide, WSO is the global voice for stroke. WSO is an international NGO in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO). The World Stroke Congress will next take place in October 2012 and will be held in Brasilia, Brazil.

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