Our 2014 World Stroke Organization (WSO) annual report will shortly be published (http://www.worldstroke.org/) outlining the developments in 2014, a remarkable year! It is an exciting time for the global stroke scene, with recent publications demonstrating the benefits of endovascular thrombectomy in selected patients with acute ischemic stroke and large vessel occlusion. This major advance will be incorporated in Advanced Stroke Care Services detailed in our recent WSO Global Stroke Services Guidelines, the first global guideline for stroke, which was released in October 2014. The document is available as open access in the International Journal of Stroke. The WSO is facilitated by partnerships with major stroke organizations around the world, such as the American Stroke Association, European Stroke Organization and Asian Pacific Stroke Organization, as well as many other important regional and national bodies. We congratulate Kennedy Lees and the organizers of the first European Stroke Organization Congress held in Glasgow, April 2015.

Advocacy for stroke is a key mission for WSO. We recently convened our first Advocacy Workshop in Glasgow, aimed at developing a 3-year plan to facilitate communication updates in both developing and developed countries. Our global campaign, I am Woman: Stroke Affects Me, is our theme in 2014 to 2015 and highlights the greater effect of stroke on women around the world, including their disproportionate share of the caregiver burden. Our campaign committee received >40 entries for our World Stroke Day awards. The 2014 WSD awards were first place gold to the American Stroke Association, second place silver to the Brazilian Academy of Neurology, Brazilian Stroke Society, Brazilian Stroke Network, Brazilian Stroke Association, and third place bronze to the Pakistan Stroke Society. The WSO awarded the individual prize to Rosette Kajungu Mutambi from Mbarara, Uganda. Her campaign targeted women in Mbarara and was aimed at breaking the myth that being fat is a sign of success. A common theme of these submissions was the message that stroke is a largely preventable and treatable condition.

We are pleased to announce 2 new Honorary Lifetime Memberships of WSO, recognizing the outstanding contributions of Wolf-Dieter Heiss and Shanthi Mendis. Dieter Heiss was a superb former President of the International Stroke Society (the forerunner of the WSO) and has made pivotal research contributions to our field, particularly in the pathophysiology of acute stroke and the ischemic penumbra. Shanthi Mendis has recently retired as the World Health Organization Coordinator of Chronic Diseases Prevention and Management. She has been a great supporter and collaborator with the WSO, an influential advocate for our mission to improve stroke prevention and treatment.

Vladimir Hachinski has been a key driver in our WSO efforts to highlight the close linkage between stroke and dementia. Our planned World Stroke Proclamation for World Stroke Day 2015 targets stroke and dementia, emphasizes that dementia is partially preventable by modification of risk factors, reducing also the burden of subclinical cerebrovascular disease. Michael Brainin represented WSO at the landmark World Health Organization ministerial meeting Global Action Against Dementia, March 16 to 17, 2015.

WSO is also actively involved and represented in the on-going activities on noncommunicable diseases at World Health Organization and at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The Global Coordinating Mechanism for noncommunicable diseases will convene in April and in November 2015. The World Health Organization World Health Assembly, Geneva, will start on May 19. Later in May, there will be the United Nations General Assembly interactive hearings for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, one of the important preambles to the United Nations high-level meeting in September.

Educational activities are also a key focus for WSO. We recently announced 5 successful candidates for the Young Stroke Professionals Travel Grants, enabling these individuals to undertake departmental observerships in expert centers in Singapore, Canada, Switzerland, St. Louis, and Singapore. Michael Brainin recently attended meetings in Vietnam, and we are planning WSO educational programs in Beijing at the Tiantan congress in June and at the World Congress of Neurology in Chile in October. Peter Sandercock will represent WSO at the regional Sub-Saharan Neurology Course in Khartoum this year.

Around 60% of stroke occurs in Asia. The Japan Stroke Society has become a new partner of WSO. With 7000 members, we hope that many will join the WSO. I and many WSO leaders recently attended the Japan Stroke Society meeting in Hiroshima, a large and impressive
congress. Chaired by Masayasu Matsumoto, the Hiroshima Declaration was launched at the meeting, aimed at promoting political action and support for ensuring that all individuals receive optimal stroke prevention, therapy, and long-term care. The Chinese Stroke Association is another important new partner. Asia is of course the designated region for our next World Stroke Congress, to be held in Hyderabad, October 26 to 29, 2016.

If you are not already a member, please join WSO and please contact either of us with any ideas or suggestions (Stephen.davis@mh.org.au or Bo.Norrving@med.lu.se).

Disclosures

None.

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The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:
http://stroke.ahajournals.org/content/46/7/e173