Organizational Update

World Stroke Organization

Stephen M. Davis, MD; Bo Norrving, MD, PhD

The World Stroke Organization (WSO) was formed in 2006, and the WSO Board has embarked on a strategic planning process after our first decade. The strategic plan involves an evaluation of our current position and status and development of a clear plan where we see ourselves in 5 years’ time as an organization. We have held 2 workshops in Kuala Lumpur and Los Angeles, which were externally facilitated by an experienced management consultant. Key strategic themes have emerged, including strengthening our global capacity to reduce the impact of stroke, building awareness and knowledge of stroke, and growing a robust organization. The Board has endorsed a Vision for the WSO, “A life Free of Stroke.” We have retained our central mission statement “To reduce the global burden of stroke through prevention, treatment and long-term care.” We plan to invite feedback from WSO members and stakeholders. The final plan will be presented at the European Stroke Organization Conference in Barcelona in May 2016.

After our nomination process, we are delighted to confirm the appointments of 2 outstanding and internationally renowned stroke experts for the next 2 presidential terms. Werner Hacke will serve as the next president of WSO from October 2016 to 2018 and then Michael Brainin will take over as president from October 2018 to 2020.

We organized another highly successful World Stroke Day, October 29, 2015. There were 141 events in 40 countries and 957 online articles across 5 continents. There was a highly successful social media campaign. The campaign theme for 2015 remained “I am Woman,” and our new campaign theme for 2016 will be “Face the Facts: Stroke is Treatable.” Winners of the 2015 World Stroke Day awards included the Chinese Stroke Association (low- and middle-income category) and Finnish Brain Society (high-income category), with special awards for outstanding individual achievement to Mrs Rita Melifonwu (Nigeria) and Professor Dipes Mandal (Bengal). A highlight of World Stroke Day achievement to Mrs Rita Melifonwu (Nigeria) and Professor Dipes Mandal (Bengal). A highlight of World Stroke Day was the publication of the updated World Stroke Proclamation led by Vladimir Hachinski on behalf of WSO. Our earlier proclamation was revised to emphasize both stroke and preventable dementia. The updated proclamation promotes the close linkage between stroke and dementia, the many shared risk factors, and the opportunities for prevention. The proclamation has been endorsed by many major national and international bodies, including neurological and psychiatric organizations, Alzheimer diseases, and other dementia bodies, together with major stroke organizations.

Global advocacy is one of our key activities. We attended several meetings in New York in September 2015, held in conjunction with the landmark United Nations high-level meeting on Sustainable Development Goals. These included an important health target to reduce the global burden of non-communicable diseases 30% by 2030. The WSO has joined the noncommunicable disease alliance as a formal affiliate, ensuring we have a place at the table commensurate with the importance of stroke. Other WSO leaders have attended the WHO strategic technical meeting on Management of Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke in Geneva together with the WHO Global Coordination Mechanism on noncommunicable disease meeting at the WHO, also held in Geneva. The WSO was involved with other organizations in the Latin American Stroke Summit, organized by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. This summit addressed stroke care in the Latin American region and led to the development of a consensus statement, The Santiago Declaration, serving to unify the regional leadership under key priorities and commitments, also involving the Pan American Health Organization.

Educational and research activities are central to our mission. The WSO has organized or been a partner with other key organizations in delivering teaching courses in 2015 in Sub-Saharan Africa (Khartoum), Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, and Santiago, Chile. Under the multilearning online educational platform, we launched the revamped World Stroke Academy. This is a vibrant educational experience led by the Editor in Chief, Michael Brainin. We invite you to register and visit the revamped World Stroke Academy Web site, which provides stroke information for healthcare professionals on a dynamic and award winning e-learning platform (http://world-stroke-academy.org/). Our WSO research committee, chaired by Ralph Sacco, has published a set of global research recommendations in line with our mission for stroke treatment, prevention, and recovery. Key themes include establishment of stroke centers and trials networks, establishing a global chronic disease prevention initiative, standardizing the practice of poststroke rehabilitation, and evaluating the best ways to improve life after stroke (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ijs.12625/epdf). We are excited about the move to SAGE Publishing in 2016 for
the International Journal of Stroke, our flagship research journal, edited by Geoffrey Donnan.

Under the leadership of Werner Hacke, Peter Sandercock, and Jeyaraj Pandian, planning is proceeding well for the 10th World Stroke Congress being held in Hyderabad India, October 26 to 29, 2016. This will be an outstanding scientific, educational, and cultural experience in a vibrant setting with a rich and diverse history in one of India’s high-tech cities. We invite you to attend the congress at http://wsc.kenes.com/.

Disclosures

None.

Key Words: organizations ■ stroke
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Stroke. 2016;47:e82-e83; originally published online April 12, 2016;
doi: 10.1161/STROKEAHA.116.012880
Stroke is published by the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75231
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Print ISSN: 0039-2499. Online ISSN: 1524-4628

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/47/5/e82

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