

New Global Disability Figures Spur World Stroke Organization Call for Urgent Action on Stroke Prevention

Friday 27 October, 2017

The World Stroke Organization, a membership organization representing over 55,000 professionals and many more stroke patients worldwide, has today called for urgent action to prevent stroke. The call, made in advance of World Stroke Day on the 29th October, comes in response to new data that shows stroke was responsible for over 116 million years of life lived with disability (YLD) worldwide in 2016. This adds to existing global mortality data that positions stroke as the second largest cause of death.

There are an estimated 17 million strokes worldwide each year. While stroke incidence and mortality rates in high income countries have been on the decline, progress is still slow and uneven. There are also indications that the risk factors for stroke such as hypertension, obesity, diabetes and smoking are becoming increasingly prevalent in both high and low-income countries. This has the potential to further slow progress on stroke prevention.

WSO President Werner Hacke said 'In many low-to-middle income countries stroke has reached epidemic proportions. In these countries, the capacity of health and social care systems to provide treatment and the long-term support that stroke survivors and their families need is also limited. This has disastrous effects on individuals, families as well as on economic development.'

Professor Hacke continued 'On World Stroke Day 2017 our members are sending out a global message that stroke **is** preventable and that we all have good reasons to prevent it. We know that 90% of strokes are associated with just 10 risk factors that we can all do something about. Addressing these risk factors would not just have a major impact on stroke, they would also prevent deaths from other non-communicable diseases. Giving urgent priority to prevention now will yield obvious benefits in terms of reduced human, social and economic costs.'

The WSO has called on governments to implement population wide prevention strategies; remove financial barriers to prevention screening; develop regional and national strategies to reduce premature deaths from NCDs by 30% by 2030.

For more on World Stroke Day visit www.worldstrokecampaign.org

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