



World Stroke
Organization



OUR IMPACT 2025



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Our impact in 2025

Stroke is one of the world's leading causes of death and disability, affecting millions of people every year and yet so much of its burden is preventable. We exist to change that. Our vision is **a life free of stroke**. Our mission is **to reduce the global burden of stroke through prevention, treatment, and long-term care**.

This Impact Report reflects on 2025, a year of meaningful progress across our work. Building on the message from our President, the pages that follow tell the story of how we are turning commitment into action, and action into change.

Our work is guided by **five strategic priorities**, established for 2023–2026, to tackle stroke globally:



Deliver proactive and collaborative advocacy

WSO will drive global political commitment and supporting regional and national advocacy in collaboration with our members towards delivering positive outcomes.



Deliver accessible, engaging and applicable training and education

WSO will provide world class training and education for stroke-care professionals



Change perceptions of stroke

WSO will lead the global conversation on stroke focused on changing perceptions of stroke to underpin multi-level action on stroke prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and long-term management.



Capacity Strengthening

WSO will work with health care professionals, civil society, and people with lived experience to identify and increase understanding of the importance of quality stroke care across the continuum.



Deliver impact through partnerships and collaboration

WSO will collaborate with global, regional and national partners to identify and facilitate achievement of shared goals.

From commitment to action - a message from our President

In 2025, WSO's long-term commitment to improving stroke care worldwide continued to deliver tangible results at country level. Here, WSO President Professor Jeyaraj Pandian reflects on the milestones that defined the year, and what they mean for the future of stroke care worldwide.

What demonstrated clearly the positive and tangible impact WSO is making to stroke care?



In 2025, I saw real, measurable progress in how WSO is improving access to quality stroke services globally. What stood out most was the evolution of the WSO Stroke Center Certification program into a truly global quality framework. The launch of the new certification platform brought a more structured, data-driven approach, enabling transparent assessment, robust on-site audits, and continuous performance monitoring.

What makes this impactful is not just the system itself, but where it is reaching. This year, we saw the first WSO-certified stroke centres established in countries such as South Africa, Vietnam, China, and Nepal. That matters. It shows that internationally recognised standards of stroke care are not limited to high-income settings, they are achievable across diverse health systems.



Behind this is a growing sense of trust. More than 120 hospitals across 30 countries have now entered the certification pathway. At the same time, we strengthened the credibility of the program by bringing together assessors from around the world to align on quality and consistency. For me, this is where WSO's impact is most tangible, helping countries move from aspiration to delivery of high-quality, standardized stroke care.

What three WSO activities this year will have the most significant impact on stroke beyond 2025?



First, the Global Stroke Alliance meeting in Hanoi was a turning point. Bringing together policymakers, clinicians, and public health leaders from 17 countries created a shared understanding of regional needs and, importantly, resulted in clear, country-specific action plans. That kind of alignment is critical if we are to improve access to stroke care at scale.

Second, our in-country engagement continues to make a difference. In Iraq, seeing the development of a National Stroke Policy and the prospect of the country's first certified stroke centre was incredibly encouraging. In Tunisia, the momentum towards certification reflects growing national commitment to quality care. These are practical steps that will translate into better outcomes for patients.



“Internationally recognised standards of stroke care are not limited to high-income settings, they are achievable across diverse health systems. In 2025, that stopped being an aspiration and became a reality.”

Professor
Jeyaraj Pandian
WSO President



Third, and perhaps most significant, is WSO’s advocacy at global level. Through the Global Stroke Action Coalition, we have helped elevate stroke on the international agenda, contributing to the first-ever WHO resolution on stroke. This creates a powerful policy framework for countries to prioritize stroke within their broader NCD commitments, and ultimately expand access to prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services.

What was your proudest moment as WSO President in 2025?

There were many, but what stays with me most is the growing commitment from countries, particularly across Africa, to strengthen stroke services. Engaging with ministries of health, WHO regional and country offices and seeing genuine momentum for change, often in very resource-constrained settings, has been incredibly rewarding. We are now close to securing support for pilot initiatives that will help turn these commitments into action for the people who currently have little to no access to stroke prevention, treatment or rehabilitation.

I was also deeply moved by our work in countries affected by conflict, including Iraq and Sri Lanka. Supporting stroke care development in these challenging contexts reinforced WSO’s commitment to equity, resilience, and ensuring access to high quality stroke care even in the most difficult circumstances.

Finally, visiting China and seeing the scale of ambition behind the country’s national stroke action plan was inspiring. It really reinforced for me the importance of coordinated, evidence-based approaches—and what is possible when stroke is treated as a true health system priority.





Deliver proactive and collaborative advocacy

Throughout 2025 WSO has worked to advance its impact as the leading global advocate for stroke, aligning our advocacy and public awareness communication strategies to strengthen our call to action.

From coordinated global and regional policy engagement, the development of strategic advocacy partnerships, and delivery of high-impact stakeholder communication campaigns, WSO has worked to ensure that stroke is better understood and that all stakeholders know the actions they can take to change stroke outcomes. Whether that action is recognizing the signs of stroke, or putting in place comprehensive and coordinated stroke services, WSO has championed the global call for #StrokeActionNow.

A global voice for stroke Global Stroke Action Coalition



Officially launched in 2025, the Global Stroke Action Coalition (GSAC) is a multi-stakeholder platform convened by WSO to unite civil society, clinicians, industry, and policymakers behind a shared goal: accelerated action on stroke across the full care pathway. As co-Chairs of the Coalition, WSO past-Presidents Bo Norrving and Sheila Martins bring their extensive stroke policy influence, expertise and implementation insight to the partnership.

The Global Stroke Action Coalition has:

- ▶ Provided a coordinated multi-sectoral global advocacy platform, aligning diverse stakeholders behind 5 key policy recommendations to increase impact
- ▶ Increased visibility of stroke within major global health discussions, particularly in the lead-up to the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs
- ▶ Positioned action on stroke as essential to achieving SDG3 and Universal Health Coverage (UHC)
- ▶ Secured a draft WHO resolution on stroke that, when adopted in 2026, will drive government action and accountability on stroke



78th World Health Assembly

- ▶ Coordinated a flagship Coalition side event with input from Bhutan, Brazil, Egypt and Panama highlighting the urgent need for investment in stroke care
- ▶ Launched Stroke Action Now, a Coalition policy brief setting out five key recommendations for policy makers
- ▶ Contributed to broader non-communicable disease and universal health coverage discussions, reinforcing stroke as a cross-cutting health priority
- ▶ Centered the voice of lived-experience through in person and video testimony from Coalition Stroke Ambassadors



UNGA High-Level Meeting on Prevention and Control of NCDs

The 2025 UN General Assembly focus on NCDs provided a key opportunity to build visibility for stroke within the global health policy discussion. WSO President Prof Jeyaraj Pandian and Executive Director Mia Grupper contributed to both the Civil Society Dialogue and discussions on the floor of the UN General Assembly delivering statements that underscored the urgent need for targeted, coordinated stroke action at each event.



WSO statements drew on recommendations set out in the Stroke Action Now policy brief, highlighting the growing human and economic burden and the unprecedented opportunities that policy-makers have to reduce the global burden of NCDs - through strategic interventions in stroke prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.





UN WSO side event

Accelerating the Global NCD Response Through Urgent Action on Stroke

Policy makers had the opportunity to explore the opportunities for progress at an UN side event, that brought together Ministers of Health, global health leaders, and advocates to share and discuss effective strategies to leverage opportunities across the stroke care continuum as part of their NCD strategic response.

55

Participants from diverse disciplines

7

Ministers of Health

7

Coalition Partner Organizations

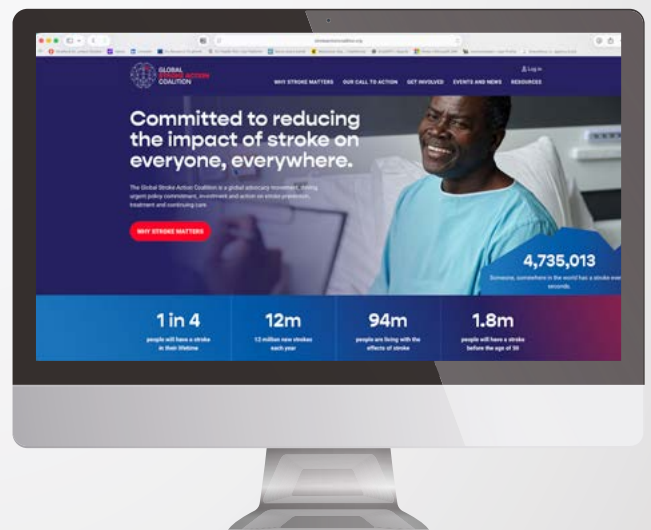
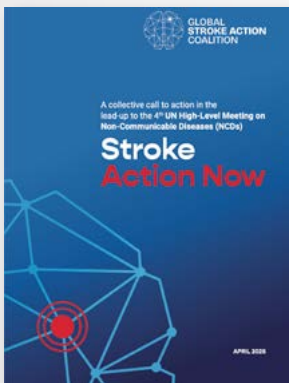
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Global NCD Stakeholders

Award-winning advocacy campaign

The **Every Minute Counts advocacy** campaign formed the public communication cornerstone of WSO's advocacy communication, building a large global network of endorsement and support from civil society, policy and public stakeholders.

- Mobilised **global stakeholders, including 10 Ministry of Health Champions, >100 civil society leaders and >1500 individual supporters**
- Amplified a clear, actionable message linking **the advocacy call to a wider public awareness campaign highlighting the need for #StrokeActionNow**
- Received recognition as a **best-in-class advocacy campaign** by an international panel of expert healthcare communicators.



100

Organizational endorsements from 40+ countries

1500

Letters of Support signed

>30

Ministries and Missions engaged

In conversation with...

WSO is the only global organization solely dedicated to stroke, how does that shape our approach to advocacy?

It is both a responsibility and an advantage. Our relationships with the WHO, our consultative status with UN ECOSOC, and our engagement with key global policy-making bodies mean we are uniquely positioned to lead coordinated advocacy at the highest level. That is the foundation on which the Global Stroke Action Coalition was built.

The Coalition delivered impact quickly in 2025, what drove that?

Three things stand out. The UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs in New York created a genuine opportunity to make stroke impossible to ignore on the global agenda. We were also able to bring together a broad coalition, scientific and patient organizations alongside industry partners from across the world, enabling us to speak with one unified voice. And the campaign was well-prepared, with clearly defined objectives that kept everyone aligned and focused on what mattered.

What did the Coalition mean in practice for WSO members and the communities they served in 2025?

It offered a more coordinated approach to advocacy spanning global, regional, and national levels, and crucially, participation was open to all. Any organization, institution, or hospital could join as an endorser and access shared materials and resources. We are proud to have surpassed 100 endorsers in 2025, and with the WHO resolution on stroke now within reach, we are optimistic that stroke will be recognised as a health priority at every level, translating into real benefits for patients around the world.



Maria Fredin Grupper
Executive Director
WSO



WSO Global Stroke Alliance

WSO Global Stroke Alliance (GSA) meetings have established an impact focused program of ministerial meetings, interactive roundtable discussions, keynote presentations on prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, alongside hands-on acute treatment workshops. GSA events have a track record in laying the foundations for commitment to strategic regional and national stroke action plans.



Global Stroke Alliance Vietnam



220

Participants

17

Countries

1

Commitment to
a regional Stroke
Action Plan



Global Stroke Alliance LATAM

The Global Stroke Alliance Meeting held in Panama November 13-15, led by the host country's Minister of Health, Fernando Boyd Galindo, brought together ministries from across Central America and the Caribbean to review regional progress and define concrete next steps for implementation.

Regional progress since 2024

- ▶ Panama has officially launched its National Stroke Plan and has 4 newly certified stroke centers.
- ▶ Honduras has begun to deliver thrombolytic stroke treatment to patients as part of a national effort to advance acute treatment.
- ▶ El Salvador has launched a National Stroke Action Plan with technical support from WSO.
- ▶ Dominican Republic, has delivered the first ever thrombolysis in a public hospital.

Mechanical Thrombectomy workshop Vietnam

Alongside the GSA in Hanoi, WSO delivered a three-day mechanical thrombectomy workshop hosted by Bach Mai hospital. Global and local experts provided hands-on training aimed at expanding access to this life-saving intervention across the region.



Centering the voice of lived experience in policy discussion

Lived experience of stroke is critical expertise that needs to be part of stroke decision-making. Our advocacy this year has worked to bring the experience and voices of stroke survivors and caregivers into Coalition high-level events, decision-making Committees and working groups through our six Lived Experience Ambassadors.

Who are the Lived Experience Ambassadors and what is their role?

The Lived Experience Ambassadors are stroke survivors who bring a real-life perspective to the Global Stroke Action Coalition. We understand stroke not just medically, but emotionally, socially and practically. We are involved to make sure decisions aren't made about stroke without including people who have actually lived it. Our role is to keep lived experience of stroke at the centre of stroke decision making and priority setting by sharing our experiences, highlighting gaps in care and recovery, and helping guide the Coalition's work so it stays relevant to what people actually need, not just what looks good on paper.

How did the group contribute to the Coalition in 2025?

We contributed by showing up consistently and bringing lived experience into conversations that might otherwise be more clinical or policy-focused. A big part of that was storytelling—sharing what stroke recovery actually looks like day to day, including the long-term challenges that often get overlooked. We added our voices to a media campaign, were panellists in webinars and spoke at events. Speaking about his contribution to the UN High Level Meeting side event, John McGowan said, 'Because the Ambassadors were able to work on this statement collaboratively and we had the advantage of so many different viewpoints, our talk resonated with a wide cross section of attendees'.

What are some of your plans for 2026?

In 2026, we want to be more visible and more integrated into the Coalition's work. That includes continuing advocacy and awareness efforts, but also pushing for more representation of different stroke experiences globally. Michelle Ballasiotes says, 'I'm interested in continuing to create content that shows what living with stroke actually looks like in a practical, day-to-day way, while also connecting that back to bigger advocacy efforts. As a group, we want to keep strengthening our voice so lived experience isn't just included, but expected, in shaping stroke care and policy'.



John McGowan



Michelle Ballasiotes



Joseph Rukelibuga



Melinda Roaldsen



Richard Djan-Krofa



Angela Yeo

6

GSAC Lived Experience Ambassadors

6

Countries across the world represented

2

International events



Deliver accessible, engaging and applicable training and education

A global stroke workforce with access to the latest evidence-based education is one of the most powerful tools in reducing the burden of stroke. Yet access to high-quality education remains inequitable, shaped by geography, language, and resource.

In 2025, WSO continued its work to change this, equipping stroke care professionals across the world with the knowledge, skills, and networks they need to deliver better care. The overarching objective of WSO's educational offer is to improve patient outcomes through the translation of knowledge into clinical practice



World Stroke Academy

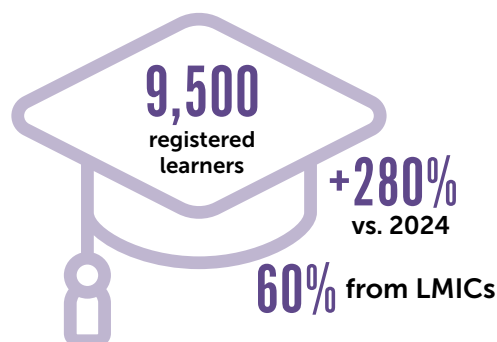
Throughout the year World Stroke Academy (WSA) has continued its strong growth trajectory. .

In 2025, WSA focused on expanding educational content through structured learning pathways, advanced e-learning modules, and expert series covering key areas such as prevention, acute care, and rehabilitation, all within our open-access model for broad and sustainable reach.

We also strengthened global accessibility with more multilingual and region-specific programming, especially for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), through partnerships with global and local stakeholders to co-create content and build capacity.

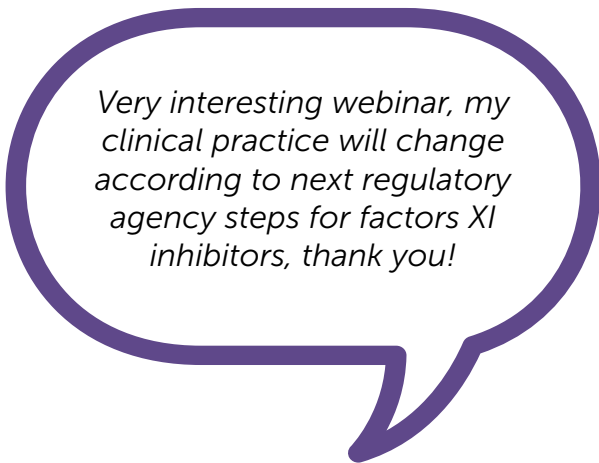
To enhance engagement and interactive learning formats, WSA invested in interactive formats like case-based learning, live discussions and practical tools. Integration with the International Journal of Stroke and other WSO programs further reinforced the link between evidence and practice.

A data-driven approach guides ongoing improvement, using learner feedback and performance metrics to refine content and measure its impact on clinical knowledge and patient care.





186
countries
reached



Very interesting webinar, my clinical practice will change according to next regulatory agency steps for factors XI inhibitors, thank you!

25 live
webinars
+14
vs. 2024

80%
likely to
change
clinical
practice

In conversation with...

What key stroke educational needs were you responding to in 2025?

In 2025, we focused on making high-quality stroke education more accessible, practical, and clinically relevant across diverse healthcare settings. Our priority was to close the evidence-to-implementation gap through interactive, outcome-oriented learning, with expanded multilingual and regionally adapted content, particularly for low- and middle-income countries, where stroke burden is greatest. Growth in learners, traffic, and global reach confirmed the urgency of this need.

What would you say was the most impactful innovation for WSA in 2025?

Two initiatives stood out. First, our new podcast series offered busy clinicians a flexible, engaging learning format. Second, formalizing collaboration with AHA/ASA and ESO around shared webinars, highlighting ISC, ESOC, and WSC advances, created a powerful partnership model uniting the global stroke community. Both will continue to strengthen engagement, extend reach, and accelerate knowledge-to-practice translation beyond 2025.

How does WSA support WSO impact and how will this develop in 2026?

WSA serves as WSO's educational engine, we support committees, connect with programs like the International Journal of Stroke and Future Stroke Leaders Program, and co-create content with regional and global partners. In 2026, I see this growing through more systematic multilingual delivery, deeper regional adaptation, stronger partnerships, and data-driven education that demonstrates measurable impact on knowledge, practice, and ultimately patient outcomes.



**Assoc. Professor
Octávio Marques
Pontes-Neto**

**Editor in Chief
World Stroke Academy**





WSO Future Leaders

Throughout 2025, the WSO Future Leaders Program continued to build the leadership capacity the global stroke community needs, equipping the next generation of clinicians, researchers, and advocates with the knowledge, skills, and networks to drive meaningful change in stroke care across their regions.

Cohort 3 advanced funded research projects spanning prevention, acute treatment, rehabilitation, and policy across diverse global settings, while developing skills in leadership, scientific communication, and publishing. A residential workshop in Perugia provided vital in-person connection, followed by participation in the World Stroke Congress in Barcelona, where they engaged with the wider global stroke community.

The cohort is now well positioned to present their findings at WSC 2026 in South Korea, the culmination of two years of research and collaboration.

Reflecting the program's continued momentum, applications opened in December 2025 for Cohort 4, with the theme of "Implementation of quality stroke care", signalling the next chapter in developing stroke leaders who can contribute to the delivery of real-world impact.

Future Leaders cohort of 2025 / 2026



Our global community of stroke leaders

85

Participants from diverse disciplines

20

Countries across six global regions

24

Abstracts submitted to WSC 2025

9

Alumni on the ISJ editorial board

In conversation with...

What was your motivation to join the Future Leaders Program?

My path to the WSO Future Leaders Program began through mentorship under Dr. Jeyaraj Pandian, whose work gave me a front-row view of a truly global stroke organization. Stroke had already claimed my professional heart, and it became clear that making a meaningful difference, beyond my hospital or country, meant being part of this ecosystem. The program wasn't just professional development; it was an invitation to grow into the kind of leader the global stroke community needs: one with clinical excellence, vision, advocacy, and the courage to lead across borders.

How did the program prepare you to step up in your leadership role?

The program was transformative in ways I hadn't anticipated. Beyond gaining knowledge from world-leading experts, it was the broader lessons, health policy, advocacy, confidence in global forums, and what leadership truly means, that shaped me most. The relationships I built with colleagues worldwide continue to fuel collaborative work today.

What is a practical example the Program has guided your practice today?

The most enduring lesson was that stroke care cannot be transformed in isolation, change requires collaboration, advocacy, and systems-building. Contributing to India's National Stroke Action Plan showed me how policy is shaped, and the Future Leaders Program gave me the language and confidence to engage meaningfully beyond the clinic. Leadership isn't always about leading from the front, sometimes it's about being a reliable presence where important decisions are made, and having the confidence to add value when it matters.



Dr. Ivy Sebastian
Neurologist

Future Leaders
Alumni





Strengthening stroke care capacity in Africa

With global projections indicating that over 90% of the global stroke burden will fall on low-income countries by 2050, delivering capacity strengthening interventions in these settings is a key priority for WSO. In 2025, WSO implemented two large-scale, multi-country stroke initiatives in Nigeria and Tanzania, translating knowledge into real-world system change to support quality acute stroke care, rehabilitation and community reintegration.

Nigeria

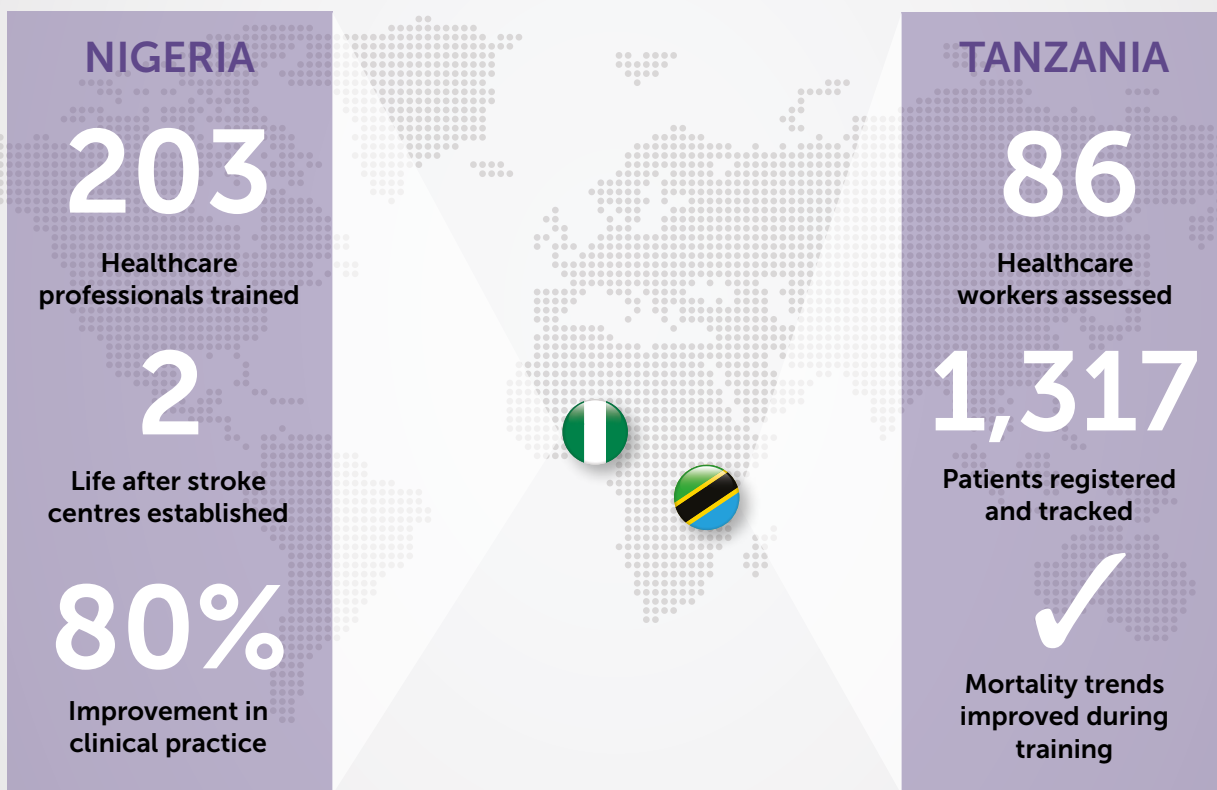
Working across multiple sites, the Nigeria initiative focused on building sustainable stroke care infrastructure where little previously existed. Over 200 healthcare professionals completed hybrid training, with significant measurable improvements in both clinical knowledge and practice. FMC Asaba Life After Stroke Centre was established, and now sees 15-20 patients per day. While 100 stroke champions were trained to drive community awareness of stroke risk factors, symptoms and the need for emergency medical care.

A stroke registry was established to track 163 patients with structured follow-up at 28 and 90 days. 21 stroke KPIs were introduced to drive and monitor quality improvement, with early evidence of better outcomes in dedicated stroke units and reductions in aspiration pneumonia through swallow screening.

Tanzania

Across three major hospitals, the Tanzania initiative delivered system-level improvements in stroke care. A training program saw 86 healthcare workers assessed over the course of the program. A stroke registry now tracks over 1,300 patients, one of the largest stroke datasets in the region, with mortality trends showing improvement during the training period. Reported patient outcomes include improvements in mobility, communication, self-care, and quality of life.

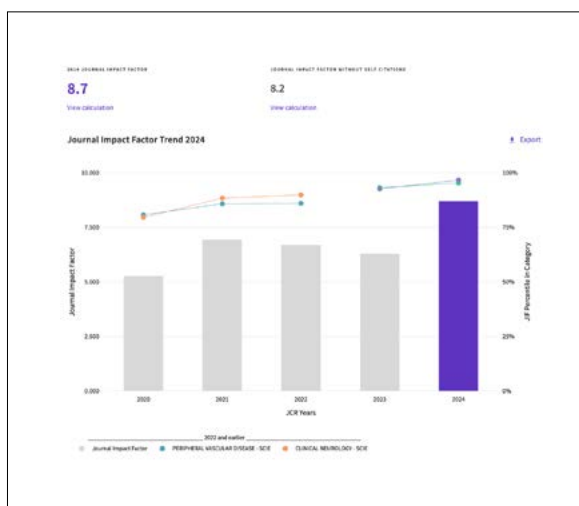
Improving outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa



International Journal of Stroke

The International Journal of Stroke is the official publication of the World Stroke Organization, publishing high-quality research, reviews, and clinical trial protocols.

The impact of the journal increased to 8.6 in 2025, consolidating its position as a top-tier stroke publication.





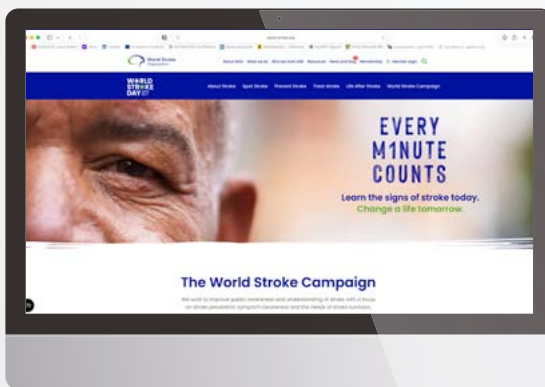
Change perceptions of stroke

On 29 October 2025, the global stroke community united behind a single message: when it comes to stroke, every minute counts and we need to #ActFAST. Mobilising organizations and individuals across the world, World Stroke Day 2025 reached new audiences and drove urgent action on stroke symptom awareness. The campaign also celebrated the organizations and individuals making the greatest impact through the annual World Stroke Campaign Awards.

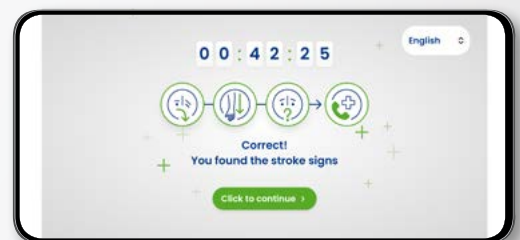


World Stroke Day

To support the campaign, WSO provided organizations and individuals worldwide with a comprehensive toolkit, social media assets, key messages, creative resources, and a customisable poster builder, available in 11 languages. Interactive tools including the Stroke Spotter quiz and game offered engaging, shareable formats to extend reach, while the FAST Heroes program continued to build stroke awareness within families and communities through the relationship between children and grandparents.



Campaign microsite



Become a stroke spotter interactive game



Hero videos



Customisable posters



Social media assets

World Stroke Day map of action

Organizations from all over the world participated in World Stroke Day activities.



163

Campaign activities registered

31

Countries participated

94M

Social media audience

2M

Campaign video views

14K

Resource downloads from website

618K

Campaign website users

Spotlight on World Stroke Campaign award winners

Each year WSO identifies organizations and individuals that have demonstrated commitment, creativity and impact in raising public awareness of stroke, leveraging the World Stroke Day campaign theme and resources

Best campaign in a high-income country: Fundació Freno al Ictus

The Committee were really impressed by this campaign that used a collaborative partnership with RENFE, the Spanish high-speed train network, to raise awareness of stroke symptoms and the need for fast action.

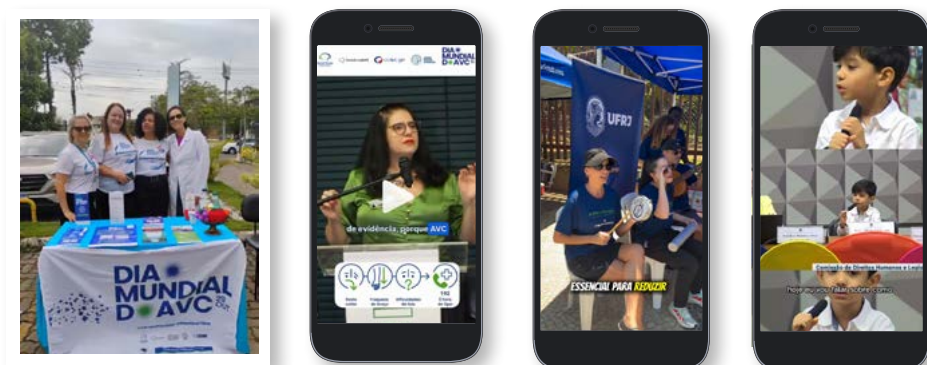
With station screens used to share information, videos on trains and stroke symptoms and emergency call numbers printed on tickets, the campaign sent its message along with passengers across the country.

Over three months the initiative reached 10 million travellers in five official national languages. The campaign showed great strategic thinking and creative connections to embed speed as the response to first sight of stroke symptoms in the public mind.



Best campaign in a low & middle income country: Associação Ação AVC

The Brazil based stroke organization developed and delivered a sustained and rounded campaign with a high level of output, multiple engagement methods linked to clear evaluation metrics that demonstrated a clear strategic approach to their communication campaign. With messaging that spanned symptom awareness and prevention and broad audience reach, this campaign was a strong example of effective stroke communication that leveraged World Stroke Day as part of a year round program.



Individual achievement award

Evans Nyambega is an impressive long-standing advocate for stroke in Kenya. As the founder of the Stroke Association of Kenya, Evans has been at the forefront of WSO awareness campaigns and lived-experience advocacy initiatives since his own stroke in 2010. He has been a strong World Stroke Day partner and in a decade and half has been instrumental in raising awareness of stroke with public and policy makers in Kenya. This year's campaign, delivered in collaboration with the local scientific association, demonstrated the development of a coordinated, impactful and sustainable approach to public awareness and advocacy in Kenya.



Evans Nyambega

Founder of Stroke Association of Kenya



Welcoming his award, Evans said "World Stroke Day 2025 was a significant milestone for us, helping to amplify the Every Minute Counts – #ActFAST message nationally while strengthening partnerships with healthcare institutions, survivors, caregivers, and policymakers. We are encouraged by the continued support and global visibility provided by the World Stroke Organization and look forward to building on this momentum in 2026."



Highly commended

Best campaign in a high-income country: Croi, Ireland

Best campaign in a low and middle income country: IFI, India

Individual achievement award: Dr Abhishek Man Shrestha, Nepal



Capacity strengthening

Improving stroke care depends on more than clinical expertise alone, it requires healthcare professionals, civil society, and people with lived experience of stroke working together towards a shared goal.

Under this priority, we committed to deepening understanding of quality stroke care across the full continuum, building meaningful structures for people affected by stroke to shape the global agenda, and strengthening the network of stroke support organizations worldwide.

Record-breaking 17th World Stroke Congress

The 17th World Stroke Congress (WSC 2025), held in Barcelona, concluded with remarkable success, marking a significant milestone for the global stroke community.

As the first fully in-person edition in several years, the Congress brought renewed energy and connection to attendees from around the world.

The event drew a record on-site attendance of more than 2,700 participants and received a record 1,618 abstract submissions, underscoring the expanding reach and impact of stroke research and collaboration worldwide.

Participants from across the globe gathered to share cutting-edge research, exchange best practices, and strengthen partnerships aimed at improving stroke prevention, treatment, and recovery.

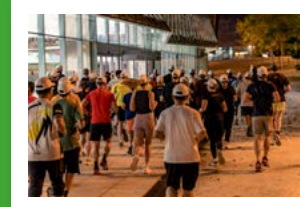
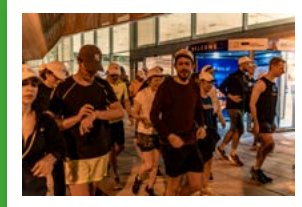


Congress innovation

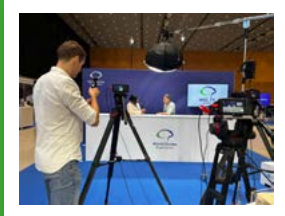
STROKE
SIMULATION
WORKSHOP



FUN RUN
WITH
OLYMPIAN
BERNARD
LAGAT



WSC TV



WSC
ESCAPE
ROOM



2708

Participants

120

Countries represented

1732

Abstracts submitted



SSO capacity strengthening

The SSO Committee promotes the work of SSOs across the stroke pathway and supports collaborative initiatives between SSOs, health professionals and industry. Through engagement in community, we champion the voice of lived experience and facilitate the meaningful involvement of people with lived experience across WSO activities. Our activities in 2025 included:

- ▶ A mapping of all SSOs known to us globally. 108 SSOs from 63 countries completed the survey. We now have knowledge of how SSOs are contributing to stroke prevention, research, policy and practice.
- ▶ The production of a scientific statement exploring how SSOs should provide essential infrastructure to operationalize the WSO - Lancet Neurology Commission pragmatic solutions for reducing global stroke burden.
- ▶ The first pre-Congress reception with SSOs and people with lived experience. This was a WSO and Bayer collaboration titled 'Valuing Experience and Enriching Connection'. Richard Djan-Krofa, a stroke advocate and stroke survivor said at the event:

The road to recovery was not easy. I faced months of speech therapy, frustration with aphasia, and the challenge of rebuilding confidence. But through determination, faith, and the support of my family and community, I found my voice again, literally and figuratively. That experience inspired me to become active in the stroke community, because I never wanted anyone else to feel alone on this journey. For me, partnership in care means more than treatment, it means being heard, respected, and involved in decisions that affect our lives. It is about creating a system where patient voices are not just included but valued across the entire stroke care ecosystem.

Richard Djan-Krofa

Stroke advocate and stroke survivor



Lived Experience Leadership



2

Workshops for SSOs at WSC

1st

Lived experience and SSO session at congress

2

SSO panelists at congress

In conversation with...

What is WSO CARES and what does it set out to achieve?

WSO CARES, the Committee for Advocating Real Experiences of Stroke, was established to build a global community of people with lived experience of stroke and to make sure those voices help shape stroke care at every level. At its heart, we bring together the personal experiences of stroke and use that collective knowledge to influence stroke care policy around the world. In 2025, WSO CARES took its first real steps, bringing together members from across the world to establish how we would work and agree on our first projects together.

You led a significant piece of work for WSO CARES in 2025, what was it?

In 2025, I led a project focused on how stroke stories are gathered, managed and used across organizations. The aim was to better understand how lived experience can be shared in ways that are ethical, purposeful and genuinely useful – not just for awareness, but to inform education, advocacy and system change. This included exploring how organizations collect stories, how consent is handled, how stories are stored and reused, and where there are opportunities to do this more thoughtfully and consistently.

What will this mean in practice going forward?

Going forward, this work can help create a more thoughtful and consistent approach to lived experience storytelling across stroke organizations. In practice, that means clearer processes around consent, storage and reuse, stronger stewardship of people's stories, and a better understanding of how lived experience can inform education and policy. In the short term, it is already helping shape discussions around good practice and where more structure and support are needed.



Stacie Brooks

Public advocate, co-Founder and Executive Director, SHINE: Global Stroke Collaboration





Stroke center certification

WSO Stroke Centre Certification is a global, data-driven program that translates evidence-based standards into measurable improvements in routine clinical practice. Through structured assessment, real-world data integration, and continuous performance monitoring, it supports hospitals to move from isolated effort to coordinated, high-quality stroke care, and to sustain that improvement over time.

First implemented in Latin America and delivered through a regional model aligned with WSO standards, the program has grown into a truly global quality framework. A defining strength is its integration with RES-Q, one of the largest international stroke quality registries in the world, allowing hospitals to use existing clinical data for certification without duplicating effort. This reflects a deliberate shift, from certification as a moment of recognition to certification as a driver of continuous improvement.

A key advancement in 2025 was the inclusion of intracerebral haemorrhage within quality metrics, ensuring the program keeps pace with evolving global evidence across all stroke types. The program is also increasingly embedded within national healthcare systems, with joint certification frameworks now in place in Egypt, India, and China, and partnerships in development across the Philippines, Nepal, and Indonesia.

Within hospitals, the impact is tangible — faster, more coordinated stroke pathways, stronger multidisciplinary collaboration, and standardized protocols aligned with global evidence.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, WSO is expanding certification across the full stroke care continuum, with higher-level certification for advanced centres and stroke rehabilitation certification in development.

137

Centres certified globally

18

Countries across six global regions

60%

Certifications from LMICs

45

Global certification assessors





Certification for every context

In 2025, the WSO Stroke Center Certification demonstrated that internationally recognised, evidence-based standards of stroke care are achievable across any health system context, from a single hospital network in South Africa to a national program serving millions of patients in China.

South Africa

For the Netcare Group, one of South Africa's largest private hospital networks, pursuing WSO Certification is a commitment to embedding internationally recognised standards and evidence-based protocols into routine stroke care delivery.

WSO provided structured guidance throughout, supporting the team to assess readiness, identify gaps, and strengthen systems before and during the process, ensuring hospitals were not simply evaluated but genuinely equipped to deliver and sustain high-quality stroke care.

Zasskia Wiese from the Netcare Group said "Improving stroke outcomes cannot be achieved by any hospital in isolation – it requires global collaboration to ensure that data-driven best practice continuously works to reduce death and disability caused by stroke all over the world and in our own communities."

China

In 2025, China demonstrated how the certification program can support large-scale system transformation. Through alignment with national stroke initiatives and data-driven quality frameworks, the program strengthened China's quality monitoring systems and embedded global benchmarks within national clinical practice, a collaboration that reflects the program's ability to adapt to large, complex health systems without compromising on the rigour of international standards.

Shen Li from Beijing Shijitan Hospital, China said "Aligning with WSO Certification has strengthened our ability to monitor and improve stroke care quality at a national level. It has given us a shared framework that connects our hospitals to global standards while supporting the ambitions of our country's national stroke program."

CASE STUDY



Zasskia Wiese

**Trauma Program
Manager and National
Stroke Coordinator**

Netcare Group



Shen Li

Professor of Neurology

**Beijing Shijitan
Hospital**





Deliver impact through partnerships and collaboration

No single organization can address the global burden of stroke alone. In 2025, we continued to strengthen the partnerships and collaborations that extend our reach, amplify our advocacy, and accelerate progress towards equitable stroke care worldwide.



United Nations

WSO is the sole global stroke organization in official consultative relations with the United Nations. This status enables us to participate in key global and regional policy events and submit official statements on behalf of our members, to influence global stroke and NCD policies. Our partnership with the UN ensures that the needs and priorities of the global stroke community are represented to national governments and supports our members in holding their governments accountable for global policy commitments.



World Health Organization

WSO is an official implementing partner of the WHO and collaborates closely with both the Department for NCD Management and Brain Health Unit. We provide technical stroke expertise to technical advisory groups and input to consultations as part of the NCD response. With our members, we contribute to WHO programs, policy, and guideline development, working together to promote equitable access to quality stroke care.

We support our members and WHO Member States in implementing the HEARTS technical package to enhance the management of cardiovascular risk factors for stroke in primary healthcare settings. Additionally, WSO contributes to evaluating evidence for the inclusion of stroke treatments and technologies in the WHO Essential Medicines List.



PATH

WSO is a member of the Coalition for Access to NCD Medicines & Products, hosted by PATH. We work together to engage with pharmaceutical and policy partners to improve and accelerate access to diagnostics and medicines for stroke, as part of the global NCD response. In turn, PATH access experts have contributed their expertise to Global Stroke Action Coalition policy-events.



NCD Alliance

As members of the NCD Alliance, we are part of a global network that collectively advocates to ensure governments fulfil their global policy commitments regarding NCDs. As an organization focused on stroke, WSO ensures that the unique needs of stroke patients and caregivers are emphasized, and alongside our clinical expertise we bring the perspectives of people with lived experience to the forefront.

Partnership with industry

Private sector partners make a significant improvement to improving stroke outcomes. WSO works with a number of industry partners operating across the stroke care pathway to develop and expand projects that align with our strategic objectives. These partnerships enable us to enhance knowledge sharing and foster innovation aimed at improving stroke outcomes for patients. Our work with industry is guided by our policy on industry engagement, which ensures our independence and preserves our ability to advocate for and promote equitable, evidence-based stroke care.



Financial report

WSO closed 2025 with a surplus of USD 82,116, safeguarding reserves despite a challenging global health funding environment. Income and expenditure both grew significantly, driven by the launch of the Global Stroke Action Coalition and the Stroke Centre Certification Program, while Congress, membership, and journal income continued to cover core operational costs.

Our work remains largely possible through the support of our partners. Accounts were audited in April 2026 and confirmed fully compliant with Swiss accounting standards. Looking ahead, we anticipate new foundation partnerships in 2026 to support targeted, country-level stroke initiatives.

World Stroke Organization Income and Expenses for the Year Ended Dec 31, 2025 (in United States Dollars)

	Total	
	2025	2024
Cash & Other Assets	2,891,405	2,975,336
Liabilities	321,775	487,821
Reserves	2,569,630	2,487,515
Income		
Membership dues	217,377	131,992
Membership fees Certification	95,040	52,500
Donations & Corporate grants	1,084,082	766,481
World Stroke Congress	162,699	261,191
Bank interest	103,551	112,204
Sale of investments	-	18,879
Journal royalties	87,877	105,240
Contribution IJS Editorial Office	109,687	110,077
Global Stroke Alliance	38,133	15,448
Stroke Center Certification	75,041	-
Other income	9,425	40,525
Total of Income	1,982,912	1,614,537
Expenses		
Operational costs	416,268	430,053
WS Academy	121,200	127,005
Awareness & Advocacy	122,520	301,870
Capacity building (SSO)	83,359	66,982
IJS Editorial office	116,893	108,873
Journal subscriptions	33,383	27,586
Future Leaders	179,662	128,741
WSO projects	157,585	159,642
EU Grant	70,567	18,196
Global Stroke Action Coalition	372,293	44,469
Certification	208,134	83,407
Bank investments cost	18,933	19,744
Total expenses	1,900,796	1,516,566
Result for the year	82,116	97,972
Reserves brought forward	2,487,514	2,389,543
Reserves carried forward	2,569,629	2,487,514

Executive Committee and Board of Directors

WSO Executive Committee members

President – Jeyaraj Pandian, India
President-Elect – Craig Anderson, Australia
Immediate Past President – Sheila Martins, Brazil
Vice President – Gustavo Saposnik, Canada
Vice President SSO – Michelle Nelson, Canada
Treasurer – Valeria Caso, Italy
Secretary – Deidre De Silva, Singapore
Ex-Officio member – Marc Fisher, USA
Ex-Officio Member – Hugh Markus, UK
Member at Large – Gisele Sampaio Silva, Brazil
Member at Large – Luciano Sposato, USA
Member at Large representing SSOs – Bruce Ovbiagele, USA
Ex-Officio member – Marc Fisher, USA
Ex-Officio Member – Hugh Markus, UK



WSO Board of Directors

Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and East Mediterranean

Farah Al Eisa, Saudi Arabia
Caleb Ademola Gbiri, Nigeria
Maria Khan Junaidi, Pakistan
Ossama Mansour, Egypt
Mayowa Ojo Owolabi, Nigeria

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Renyu Liu, USA
Ana Claudia de Souza, Brazil

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Francesca Pezzella, Italy
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Christine Kremer, Sweden

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Candice Delcourt, Australia
Ivy Sebastian, India
Keun-Sik Hong, South Korea
Kazuo Kitagawa, Japan
Liping Liu, China
M V Padma Srivastava, India
Rita Krishnamurthi, New Zealand
PN Sylaja, India

Scientific societies

Hee-Joon Bae – Korean Stroke Society
Hrvoje Budincevic – Central and Eastern European Stroke Society
Teruyuki Hirano – Japan Stroke Society
Michael Hill – Canadian Stroke Consortium and Heart&Stroke Foundation Canada
Timothy Kleinig – Stroke Society of Australasia
Thabele Leslie-Mazwi – American Stroke Association
Nijasri C. Suwanwela – Asia Pacific Stroke Organization
Thorsten Steiner – European Stroke Organization

Stroke Support Organizations:

Anita Arsovska – Macedonian organization for a fight against stroke
Anna Ranta – Stroke Aotearoa New Zealand
Arvind Sharma – Brain - Heart Foundation
Bindu Menon – Dr Bindu Menon Foundation
Maeva May – Stroke Association UK
Rita Melifonwu – Stroke Action Nigeria
Yusuke Yakushiji – The Japan Stroke Association
Arlene Wilkie – Stroke Alliance For Europe

Join us!

in our work to create a world free of stroke



Scan to make a donation



Scan to use the WSO Advocacy Toolkit to support your local stroke advocacy events



Scan to use the Global Stroke Guidelines and Action Plan to establish and implement stroke systems of care globally



Scan to become a member to join our global team to fight against stroke



Scan to learn about and promote the Global Stroke Bill of Rights



Scan to mark your dates for the World Stroke Congress 2026 in Seoul, South Korea



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