

Today, 100 million people in the world live with the consequences of a stroke and the annual costs are nearing a staggering trillion dollar mark: The World Stroke Organization is calling for action.

Key messages and top WSO priorities

Facts and figures

90%

of strokes are linked to 10 major modifiable risk factors.



Currently, there are

100M

people living with the consequences of a stroke



Every US\$1 spent on prevention of stroke and cardiovascular disease, yields an over \$10 return on investment.

Stroke is the second leading cause of death and disability worldwide.

In 2019 over **12M** people worldwide had a stroke, **6.5M** died from a stroke and stroke accounted for 143M disability-adjusted life years lost.

Stroke units are available in **91% of high-income countries** surveyed by WSO in contrast to **18% of low-income countries**. Currently, acute stroke treatments (clot-busting technologies) are available in **~60% of high-income countries compared to 26% of low-income countries**.



Advocacy priorities

Advocacy priority 1 – Stroke Prevention

Stroke is a vascular catastrophe to the brain and is caused by an occlusion or rupture of a brain vessel causing acute paresis, disturbance of motor coordination and dexterity mostly on one side of the body. Speech disturbance and visual defects often occur. While treatment has made great progress, the mainstay of coping with this disabling or deadly disease remains prevention.

There is a potential to reduce the number of strokes substantially. **Cutting Stroke in Half** is WSO's flagship advocacy initiative with a focus on the global prevention of stroke and dementia. The effective implementation of population-wide strategies could prevent over half of stroke and cardiovascular disease events.

Guiding principles include reducing exposure to stroke risk factors; implementing and promoting motivational mobile technologies; facilitating access to low dose combination medications in one polypill for specific groups and investing in the training and deployment of community health workers.

Advocacy priority 2 – Stroke Recognition

Improving public awareness of stroke and rapid recognition of the symptoms of stroke and of the benefits of timely hospital admission increases an individual's chances of preventing death and disability. The WSO "Save Minutes. Save Lives - #Precioustime" campaign aims to raise awareness of stroke warning signs and the critical importance of seeking emergency medical care if stroke is suspected.

Advocacy priority 3 – Stroke Services

Rapid hospital admission and stroke unit care leads to better patient outcomes. Well-organized stroke care can significantly (up to 30%) reduce post-stroke morbidity and mortality. Clot-busting drugs applied in a timely manner (within a few hours after onset) increase the chance of a good outcome by a further 30%. Clot retrieval treatment increases the chance of a good outcome by more than 50%. All acute patients with stroke should therefore be treated at stroke units and have access to evidenced based therapies.

WSO advocates for the context-specific implementation of its *Global Stroke Services Guideline and Action Plan* and its companion *WSO Roadmap to Delivering Quality Stroke Care* throughout the world.



Today, there are

100M

stroke survivors around the world –

a figure which will continue to rise in the coming decades.



Advocacy priority 4 – Life After Stroke

Many stroke survivors face significant challenges that include physical disability; communication difficulties; changes in how they think, feel and act; alongside loss of work, income, independence, and social networks. Ensuring people affected by stroke have access to neuro-rehabilitation units and when needed to long-term rehabilitation and support that is essential for health, well-being and social participation. WSO invests in and advocates for the meaningful involvement of stroke survivors and caregivers in the development of national, regional and global policy.

Treatment, rehabilitation, and indirect costs for stroke are nearing the trillion dollar mark.

In 2017, the cost of stroke to the global economy has reached **US\$891 billion** (about 1.12% of the global GDP)

and is likely to continue growing if the current trends in stroke burden continues.



A WHO survey showed that

only 38% of Member States

had explicitly included stroke in their NCD response and preparedness plans.

Only 3% had explicitly allocated funds for these efforts.



Advocacy priority 5 – Action and accountability

WSO calls for bolder actions from both governmental and non-governmental organisations, including taxation from sugar loaded drinks, tobacco and alcohol (STAX) towards improving stroke treatment, prevention and rehabilitation services and to enhance population-based prevention programmes. WSO supports and advocates for the development and delivery of evidence-based comprehensive measures that encompass prevention, acute care, rehabilitation and support. WSO develops and provides guidance and support to members, partners and stakeholders to support national advocacy and works with national and regional members and global partners to advance strategies and ensure accountability for government action on their international commitments in relation to investment in NCD prevention, universal health coverage and participation.

