Preface

Stroke is a major medical issue, being one of the leading causes of mortality and disability; consequently, research aimed at improving the knowledge of pathophysiological bases, therapeutic interventions and acute optimal management is urgently needed. In this perspective, important advances have been made in the last few years, leading to the era of active stroke therapy. After a long period of therapeutic insufficiency regarding both primary and secondary prevention, important results have at last been obtained with relevant consequences in clinical practice.

All these topics have been highlighted by eminent experts at the Perugia 1st International Stroke Meeting, a great scientific event presenting the highest quality contributions in a pleasant, stimulating atmosphere, with plenty of interesting discussions and valuable participant collaborations.

This 1999 edition is the first of a series which the Perugia Stroke Team will promote regularly in order to supply original contributions to the field of stroke, in the hope of further spreading the concept of stroke as a medical emergency. In this respect, the concept of 'therapeutic window' should be considered obsolete and substituted by the classical attitude used for cardiologic emergencies: *treat it just immediately, as early as possible*.

Deep, warm thanks are expressed to all the participants who made this initiative so successful.

Virgilio Gallai, Lucilla Parnetti and the Perugia Stroke Team