

Press Release

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The Global Burden of Stroke – *Neuroepidemiology* publishes the latest reports as a free-access special issue

The latest data on the incidence, prevalence, mortality and socioeconomic consequences of stroke at global, regional and national levels have just been published in a special issue of the journal *Neuroepidemiology*, 'The Global Burden of Stroke'. These papers are offered free to readers worldwide.

Global health issues are rapidly moving targets. The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) project and other studies have demonstrated a shift, within just a few decades, in the patterns of diseases from infectious and nutritional disorders to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as stroke, heart disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic lung disease. It has become evident that tackling these NCDs is not only a clinical and public health issue, but also an important challenge for global economic development. In September 2015, the United Nations Post-2015 Sustainable Development Summit declared reducing the burden of NCDs considerably by 2030 as one of their 17 global targets. Stroke is now recognized as one of the core diseases in need of prevention, improved management and continued surveillance.

GBD is the largest and most comprehensive regional and global research program that assesses mortality and disability from major diseases, injuries and risk factors. Over the last 20 years it has evolved into an international consortium of more than 1,000 researchers from over 50 countries, and major improvements in the methodology of estimating disease burden have been made. GBD data on stroke are the most comprehensive and up-to-date stroke burden estimates at global, regional and national levels.

The current GBD 2013 estimate of stroke burden incorporates new data on stroke mortality, incidence and case fatality, as well as novel modeling methods that better integrate these parameters into burden estimation. Some of the major findings are:

- The age-specific risk for stroke declined from 1990 to 2013, but significant geographical differences between countries and regions persist and have even increased.
- There is still no country in the world where the burden of stroke, in terms of the absolute number of people affected by or dying from stroke, has declined over the last two decades.
- The bulk of stroke burden continues to be borne by developing countries.
- The overall burden of stroke in younger adults is increasing globally and now represents almost half of the total burden.
- Data on stroke in children remain limited, particularly in developing countries and for stroke in neonates.

Edited by George A. Mensah, Bo Norrving and Valery Feigin, this journal issue provides policy makers with evidence to help them take informed decisions regarding health care organization, resource allocation and planning. The data are essential to define priorities in research funding and to teach medical students and health professionals. In addition, the data allow researchers to understand the determinants of changing stroke epidemiology worldwide, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the various preventative and treatment/rehabilitation strategies for stroke at national, regional and global levels.

As these reports will have broad implications for governance and research, free access is provided to them on the *Neuroepidemiology* journal website (www.karger.com/ned).

Three key conclusions can be drawn from the findings presented in these reports:

- The urgent need for reinforcing primary and secondary stroke prevention strategies and efforts in line with the WHO Global Action Plan for non-communicable diseases remains unchanged.
- An interdisciplinary approach and active support from a diverse group of stakeholders are required to influence the burden of stroke.
- There is a continuing need for high-quality epidemiological studies of stroke in different countries and populations, with a particular emphasis on low- and middle-income countries.

Neuro epidemiology

Neuroepidemiology is the only internationally recognized peer-reviewed periodical devoted to descriptive, analytical and experimental studies in the epidemiology of neurologic disease. Its scope expands the boundaries of traditional clinical neurology by providing new insights into the etiology, determinants, distribution, management and prevention of diseases of the nervous system. The journal enjoys a high scientific reputation with a continually increasing impact factor.

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