

MEMBERS ORGANISATION REPORTS APRIL 2012

Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (AFRM)

AFRM is represented by Steven Faux.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care

Research project in education of those with mild stroke

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

Development of mobile rehabilitation team model of care; Daily speech and language therapy for acute stroke; model of care for mobile aphasic patients; rehabilitation in the home model of care; research into return-to-work, family conferences and education programs for mild stroke; upper limb spasticity; and the use of virtual reality programs.

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

Development of a rehabilitation in the home program to prevent readmission and development of a spasticity service for outpatients.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

Teaching in allied health training course in neuroplasticity; developing return-to-work programs for medical practitioners affected by stroke with the RACP; teaching in stroke rehabilitation for rehabilitation trainees and post-stroke pain for pain trainees.

Achievements and / or activities related to Data in stroke

Speaking at AROC analysis day on post-stroke rehabilitation outcome data.

Achievements and / or activities related to E-health in stroke

Undertaking stroke rehabilitation follow-up consultations using telehealth for those in nursing homes.

Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) National Neurology Group (NNG)

The APA NNG is represented by Julie Bernhardt.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care

NNG acute care booklet

NNG Upper limb management book

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

NNG has been revamping stroke card to promote stroke rehab (original card more about prevention).

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

National Advisory Committee of the APA discussed paper on Obesity and role of physio. Recognised should be part of stroke rehab as either part of cause of stroke or a secondary development post stroke due to reduced mobility.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

NNG Level 1 course, run biannually at least in every state, main focus on stroke. Targeted at those returning to work or graduates in first 2 years

NNG Level 2, tender developments and committee being developed to promote deeper knowledge about neurological conditions. In stroke area will target cognitive and perceptual issues to a greater depth.

National Stroke Foundation

The National Stroke Foundation is represented by Erin Lalor and Chris Price.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care

FAST

As part of the FAST mass media push in March, a Victorian launch was held on Wednesday 21st March with the Health Minister David Davis, to acknowledge the funding Victorian government has provided since 2007 and launch a report, outlining findings from the Victorian stroke knowledge surveys from 2006-2011. It shows that an increasing number of Victorians recognise signs of stroke but many do not act quickly. This event was hosted at an Ambulance Victoria depot, which then developed a partnership to distribute FAST wallet cards and display FAST posters throughout ambulance branches in Victoria.

Since the start of 2012, over 400 FAST activity packs have been distributed nationally to hospitals, health professionals and community health settings.

The FAST campaign is now broadcast nationally three times per year, however only funded in Victoria.

Know your numbers

The key recommendation of the 2011 **Know your numbers** Diabetes Pilot report was to add the diabetes risk assessment to the program as a core component with the assessment focussing on the completion of the Australian Diabetes Risk Assessment (AUSDRISK) Tool. This model (without the inclusion of the random blood glucose test) is likely to facilitate greater engagement with pharmacy and community health organisation and their staff therefore resulting in broader program reach. The AUSDRISK model is consistent with current clinical guidelines, is time efficient and cost effective to implement and more likely to result in a greater number of referrals to GPs.

The **Know your Numbers** program currently operates in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. It is estimated that the program will check over 100,000 people across VIC, NSW, QLD and a TAS by December 2012.

A 3-year contract has recently been signed between NSW Health, the National Stroke Foundation and The Pharmacy Guild of Australia (NSW Branch) that will incorporate a cardiovascular disease and diabetes assessment risk check (using AUSDRISK) in Pharmacy.

A 3-year contract has also been signed between Queensland Health and the National Stroke Foundation whereby the AUSDRISK check will also be an integrated part of the service in Pharmacy and community settings.

Know your numbers was successful in securing \$50,000 funding for a Tasmanian pilot in 2012. The aim of this pilot is to test program feasibility in TAS and establish and strengthen partnerships to support proposals to Government for full program implementation.

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

Audit

The 2012 Rehabilitation Audit is underway with recruitment going well and the first pieces of data being entered. For further information contact Elizabeth Ritchie: eritchie@strokefoundation.com.au

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

Stroke Consumer Resource

The care plan and consumer resource will be piloted during April/May in hospitals nationally with a view to implementation during June/July. The intention is to pilot with 200 consumers across 20 hospitals nationally.

Stroke survivor survey

The Australian Stroke Survivor and Carer Needs Survey is well underway with approximately 300 surveys returned to date. This sample has been drawn from 2 sources:

- Consumers already linked to the NSF via consumers programs
- Consumers who are part of AuSCR and have consented to be part of further research

Hospitals with stroke registers have been asked to express interest in being part of the project and we are now in the process of applying to ethics committees prior to distributing surveys via selected hospitals. For more information please email: jmckenzie@strokefoundation.com.au

StrokeConnect

StrokeConnect will be implemented nationally during 2012. Due to funding received from the Queensland government, the NSF will be introducing the beginning of a comprehensive StrokeConnect model in selected Queensland hospitals which will include the addition of a follow up phone call to consumers from participating sites.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

BeAware (formerly known as ALERT)

The National Stroke Foundation is continuing to work in partnership with the Heart Foundation to develop the primary care training package (BeAware) to support non-clinical staff, primarily general practice receptionists, to better identify and manage patients with heart attack and stroke warning signs. The online learning module is currently being developed, along with the smart card and resource for practice managers/GPs to create discussion around their current triage practices. The package will be launched in May 2012.

Resources for health care professionals

Following on from the highly successful 'Motivational interviewing for lifestyle change after stroke' held at the Wesley Research Institute, Brisbane, on 18 November a series of educational resources designed to improve the delivery and documentation of lifestyle advice to prevent secondary stroke have been developed. These include a DVD of the workshop together with a secondary prevention poster, secondary prevention resource slide deck, a discharge planning information sheet, lifestyle modification discussion guide and tips for meaningful patient engagement. All of the resources are available on the Stroke Foundation website at www.strokefoundation.com.au/health-professionals. Over the coming months a number of other resources will be developed and promoted through the NSF health professional newsletter (Stroke Progress) and NSF website. Stay tuned.

Achievements and / or activities related to Data in stroke

The NSF continues to work with the ACSQHC on the national healthcare goals. The NSF, along with a number of clinical experts, have been participating in a consultation process to assist the commission prepare a report for AHMAC. This report will outline recommended national health care goals including those for stroke. The report will also outline initial steps that are required to enable the goals to be measured and hopefully achieved.

NSF is also working with external academics to examine time trends in population-level awareness of stroke and stroke warning signs in the Australia, and the first of a series of journal publications using annual cross-sectional telephone survey data from 2004 will be submitted for publication in January.

Other information relevant to the ASC

Updating evidence in the Guidelines

The NSF is currently investigating a process to update evidence within the guidelines as it changes rather than the current situation where we wait until the full guideline is updated. For more information contact Kelvin Hill: khill@strokefoundation.com.au

NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation Statewide Stroke Services

NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation Statewide Stroke Services is represented by Sandra Lever, Michael Pollock and Mark Longworth.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care

The Pre-Hospital Assessment for Early Access to Stroke Statewide Working Party (Ministry of Health (MOH), Ambulance Service NSW (ASNSW) & ACI Statewide Stroke Services (SSS) and Emergency Care Institute (ECI) has endorsed the draft document (Transfer of Care Guideline for Stroke Patients) developed by the Stroke Reperfusion work group. The guideline addresses matters reflecting ASNSW bypass and the delivery or not of thrombolysis

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

A Rehabilitation Leaders Forum was held on 10/2/2012. The objective of the forum was to discuss implementation of the recommendations of the SSS Models of Care document within the Rehabilitation Redesign Project and to develop a Model of Care/Exit Strategy to complement the current State-wide Thrombolysis Project.

It is envisioned that the latter project will increase demand on acute stroke services which will impact on rehabilitation services. This together with the ASC's objective of ensuring that all stroke survivors are assessed for their rehabilitation needs and have a rehabilitation plan means that rehabilitation leaders need to identify strategies to accommodate these changes.

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

The network is collaborating with 4 stroke outreach services (Central Coast Neurological Support Service, Central Sydney Stroke Outreach Team, Blacktown /Mt Druitt Outreach Team & Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital Community Rehabilitation and Domiciliary Stroke Service) to identify common areas such as team composition (discipline/FTE), outcomes measures (patient /service) and education programs (generic/specific).

These are unique services that form part of the stroke patient journey and the collaboration is to consider a model of care for metropolitan/ rural stroke services.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

Stroke 2012 will be held in Sydney 29-31 August. 200 abstracts were received for consideration by the scientific committee chaired by Sandy Middleton.

200 clinicians attended the Stroke Management along the NSW/Victorian border educational workshop held in Albury on 29/3/2012. This was a combined meeting coordinated by the managers of the NSW and Victorian stroke clinical networks.

The ASNSW is combining the statewide paramedic education program on cardiac reperfusion with education on FAST in preparation for staged rollout of the ASNSW/MOH/ACI SSS prehospital notification/bypass system.

1200 paramedics will be trained by December 2012 with the completion of the training for all paramedics planned for July 2014.

Achievements and / or activities related to Data in stroke

Following consultation with NSW Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) regarding stroke data contained in the draft edition of the 2009 CEC Chart Book future publications of Chart Book reporting stroke data will be ratified through the Strategic Working Party of the SSS.

Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA)

OTA is represented by Louise Gustaffson.

Achievements and / or activities related to stroke care

OTA is or has been recently represented on a few rehabilitation related committees NAERA (National Aids and Equipment Reform Agenda) and NRA (National Rehabilitation Alliance).

OTA work with Standards Australia has recently supported the publication of some revised standards (though these are mainly engineering / manufacturing related)

- (a) Australian Standard: Wheelchairs Part 10 - determination of obstacle climbing ability of electric wheelchairs.
- (b) Wheelchairs part 1: product requirements
- (c) Hoists for the transfer of disabled persons - requirements and test methods.
- (d) Assistive products for persons with disability - classification and terminology.
- (e) Wheelchairs part 4: determination of energy consumption of electric wheelchairs.
- (f) Wheelchairs part 26: vocabulary for wheeled mobility systems.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

- There have been ongoing activities nationwide related to continuing professional development of the members.
- There has been continuing activity and informal support on a listserv for occupational therapists working in neurology which is not exclusive to people working in stroke.
- OTAL neurology special interest groups have continued to meet in members local areas.

Queensland Statewide Clinical Stroke Network

Queensland Statewide Clinical Stroke Network is represented by Greg Cadigan.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care

There is a gap in the number of existing stroke units in Queensland. This has been publicly highlighted in a National Audit report (National Stroke Foundation Organisational Survey Report, 2011), which benchmarked all States against a recommendation that hospitals with 100 or more stroke admissions per annum have a stroke unit.

It is clear therefore that performance within Queensland could be improved on two measures:

1. Hospitals with >100 admissions having a stroke unit
2. The proportion of patients with stroke accessing a stroke unit.

It is proposed that the levers of Activity Based Funding (ABF) and healthcare purchasing incentivize funding for stroke with the aim of delivering improved care quality for people with acute stroke

This proposal aims to remove the major barriers of 'set up costs' and 'adequacy of funding' with the intent that financially incentivizing stroke unit care will incentivize LHHNs to overcome the other barriers identified to implementing designated stroke units .

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

Funding has been provided by the Queensland government to implement a StrokeConnect follow up service in a limited number of Qld hospitals with an annual stroke admission exceeding 100. The Statewide Stroke Network continues to support the NSF in this area.

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

This multisite project aims to produce model/s of care for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people with stroke that is/are culturally appropriate and evidence based.

1. In conjunction with Rural Stroke Outreach Service build on "Closing the Gap" in Indigenous Health Outcomes.
 - Phase 1 seeks to engage indigenous Queenslanders' in discussions regarding culturally appropriate pathways to enable evidence based care for indigenous people with stroke across the continuum. This will involve consultation with willing participants affected by stroke either as a survivor, carer or family member, and also seeks to engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services.
 - Phase 2 will use the information gathered in phase 1 to tailor the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stroke services in the North and South of the state. These services will include transfer protocols from regional/rural sites to dedicated Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander stroke unit beds supported by a stroke team. They will also involve communication and outreach support to promote evidence based management of transient ischemic attack (TIA) and early supported back transfer of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander stroke survivors to local communities.

Achievements and / or activities related to Data in stroke

2. The Statewide Stroke Network will continue to support and collaborate with both State & National Research trials in order to transfer research evidence into clinical practice to improve stroke patient outcomes:
 - AuSCR continues to be a network priority and more Qld hospitals are coming on board. In the coming months the Qld sub set data spine is being tested.
 - T3 Trial: Triage, Treatment and Transfer of patients with stroke in emergency departments, it will rigorously evaluate an organisational intervention in Emergency Departments (EDs) to demonstrate whether addressing critical clinical elements of Triage, Treatment and Transfer (T3) and forging patient focused links between EDs and their respective ASUs will ensure that evidence-based clinical care of stroke patients begins immediately upon arrival at hospital. Through the project funding, a

project officer has now been employed to progress both the T3 & Stroke 123 research projects in Qld with an overlap into AuSCR.

- Practice evidence based stroke care: investigation of implementation and use of clinical indicators to drive guideline adherence and the effect on health outcomes
- Stroke 123, the main aim of this 4-year project is to demonstrate that integrated and comprehensive data coupled with an active and evidenced-based clinical practice improvement program is more effective than when compared to the status quo. This will be facilitated by ensuring better use of existing stroke data in Australia to routinely monitor and improve the quality of care.
- TIPS:Thrombolysis Implementation in Stroke Trial - Bridging the evidence practice gap in acute stroke care Additional evidence is needed to better develop and drive tPA implementation.
Trial aims:
 - test various tPA implementation strategies
 - test a novel method of clinical practice change and support

Achievements and / or activities related to E-health in stroke

There are a number of key neurologists/stroke specialists across the states that are providing after-hours stroke management advice within and beyond their districts.

The Statewide Stroke Network is working with Statewide Telehealth Services to develop applications for telehealth funding to equip these clinicians with videoconferencing capability and Enterprise PACS for use from their homes.

This will support timely and more accurate evaluation of acute stroke patients for their suitability for thrombolysis.

This is the first step towards the Statewide Stroke Network vision to work with LHHNs to provide a statewide roster for after-hours stroke management advice to improve rates of thrombolysis.

Other information relevant to the ASC

Thrombolysis Workshop – Townsville:

The evening workshop saw a number of key clinicians from around Qld address current evidence surrounding thrombolysis and how to select the right patient though to the nuts and bolts of tPA delivery.

The key conversation points included the hospital services that are appropriate to offer tPA, time frames of rural patient transfers, in-house patient admission post tPA (intensive care unit, high dependency unit or stroke ward) and developing an appropriate pathway (noting reservations on a blanket statewide pathway).

The workshop represented a significant step forward at a state level and provides a valuable opportunity to work with key stakeholders from around the state including the A/Director of the QAS. Dr Ben Clarke was very supportive of the work being undertaken around lysis and has provided this support in progressing future service development.

Currently plans are underway to hold a similar workshop on the Sunshine Coast in June and to further develop and educate clinicians around Qld,

Royal College of Nursing, Australia (RCNA)

The RCNA is represented by Sandra Lever.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care

Royal College of Nursing, Australia (RCNA), as Australia's peak professional nursing organisation, has continued to maintain an interest in issues relating to stroke, primarily from a national nursing perspective. This has been undertaken through our ongoing representation on the Australia Stroke Coalition. RCNA continues to support the work of the Acute Response working group and is open to supporting and promoting any nursing service delivery developments as the opportunity arises.

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

RCNA continues to support representation of nursing and active participation in the ASC Rehabilitation working group activities.

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

As part of this commitment in the last 12 months, RCNA has actively liaised with member experts to provide a response from a professional nursing perspective to The Heart Foundation and Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ) Reducing Risk in health disease - Guidelines for preventing cardiovascular events in people with coronary heart disease Secondary Prevention Guidelines.

RCNA's response was in support of the document and highlighted the need for its widespread distribution. In particular, RCNA recommended distribution to community and primary health care services in rural and remote settings, or within Aboriginal Medical Services, where the risk of heart disease can be heightened.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

RCNA continues to support representation of nursing and active participation in the ASC Workforce Training and Professional development working group activities. RCNA is open to providing 3LP educational material and courses related to stroke as the opportunity arises.

Other information relevant to the ASC

Other RCNA activities include ongoing monitoring of local, state and national issues relevant to stroke, monitoring opportunities to promote any nursing and/or nurse-led service delivery and innovations in relation to stroke, continued support for RCNA member representation on the Australian Stroke Coalition and openness to providing 3LP educational material and courses related to stroke as opportunity arises.

Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP)

The RACP is represented by Alasdair MacDonald.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care, Rehabilitation stroke care, Community stroke care and Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

All of the above areas stand to benefit from the commencement of a dialogue between senior stroke specialists within the SSA and the educational areas of the RACP to facilitate a greater level of education within basic physician training on stroke and its management. Resulting from this the first in a series of stroke teaching modules is shortly to commence with competencies for Basic Physician Trainees the primary target. From this one would hope that the quality of stroke care delivered in teaching hospitals is directly improved, that the skills of the coming generation of Physicians are better in this area and particularly this earlier exposure to teaching in this area may lead to more trainees undertaking advanced training in stroke care either as part of Neurology training or as part of areas such as General Medicine training and Geriatric training.

Achievements and / or activities related to E-health in stroke

The RACP Policy and Advocacy department has made significant submissions to appropriate government agencies to advocate for more emphasis and resource to be allocated to this area.

South Australian Stroke Clinical Network

The SA Stroke Clinical Network is represented by Susan Hillier and Andrew Lee.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care

The Working group led by Dr Andrew Lee has almost finalised the pathways and processes for the stroke journey from ED to the stroke unit discharge.

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

The Rehabilitation pathways document (produced by a working group in 2011) has been endorsed in principle by SA Health, with a few minor changes. Susan Hillier presented aspects of the Rehabilitation pathway (the Assessment tool – common to the SA and ASC working groups) at the SSA conference.

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

Nil except as covered by the Rehabilitation document which charts monitoring and surveillance as a lifelong process with secondary prevention functions as well.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

Members of the SA Stroke Steering committee have been working with Workforce Reform, Department for Health and Ageing (SA) to develop stroke workforce modelling into the future – this work continues. Andrew Lee has been involved with the study processes as part of the ASC and presented this at the SSA conference.

Achievements and / or activities related to Data in stroke

A working group was established in 2011 and is preparing a report under the chair of Dr Chris Bollen about key performance indicators for stroke in SA. The group has also been working with SA Health around stroke specific information for the electronic patient administration system that is currently under development in SA.

Achievements and / or activities related to E-health in stroke

Members of the SA Steering committee attended site visits at Mt Gambier and Whyalla to establish clear stroke pathways from Ambulance retrieval to community rehabilitation. Part of this will include e-health processes for the administration of tPA as well as for rehabilitation decision making with clinicians from the metropolitan units.

Other information relevant to the ASC

A centralised TIA clinic has been approved to go to the project development stage – a project officer will be employed to develop a plan and business case. Members of the SASSC also were involved in the SSA 2011 Adelaide conference – Simon Koblar was the scientific convenor; Susan Hillier and Andrew Lee convened successful workshops/panels on Transitions during stroke care; TIA management; and Rehab processes.

Speech Pathology Australia (SPA)

Speech Pathology Australia is represented by Christina Wilson.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care

International speaker Dr. Maggie Lee Huckabee. Rehabilitation of swallowing impairment. Vic and SA. 63 participants.

National workshop on dysphagia. 142 registrants.

Nine other CPD events on a range of topics including acquired reading and spelling disorders; apraxia of speech; acquired dysgraphia; semantics and naming therapy.

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

2012 National Tour for Speech Pathology Australia. "Recent Advances in Aphasia" Rehabilitation. 139 registrations.

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

Stroke-a-Chord is a choir composed of stroke survivors with aphasia (loss of speech after stroke). The members can sing even though most of them cannot speak. Stroke-a-Chord have nominated for the Local Project - an initiative from the Herald Sun and Bank of Melbourne to help fund projects that will improve your community. They are currently shortlisted in the category of culture. The two nominations that receive the most public votes in each category wins \$10,000. The \$10,000 would realise Stroke-a-Chord's target in financing a 30-minute documentary about the choir, stroke and aphasia with the aim to be aired on National TV.

Stroke-a-Chord held their first concert last year in September with 400 attendees. It was a fantastic occasion. The group has been supported by the volunteer efforts of many, including speech pathologist, Bronwen Jones.

Other information relevant to the ASC

Resources such as Implementing Clinical Guidelines for Stroke Managing are disseminated through our National e-news and highlighted in a range of association publications.

Dr. Erin Godecke, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Speech Pathology, School of Psychology and Social Sciences, Edith Cowan University will be our representative on the Acute Stroke Care Project (to improve the uptake of evidence based best practice in the first 48 hours of stroke care).

Stroke Society of Australasia (SSA)

The SSA is represented by Richard Lindley, Mark Parsons and Tissa Wijeratne.

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

The SSA lodged a submission to the Review of Anticoagulation Therapies in Atrial Fibrillation.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

A/Prof Bernard Yan has been leading a new SSA initiative in stroke education for Basic Physician Trainees, in discussion with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. The first workshop will be at the John Hunter Hospital in April.

Achievements and / or activities related to E-health in stroke

The new contractual arrangements for the hosting and maintenance of the Stroke e-Learning website are still under final negotiation but we hope a final resolution of remaining issues will be announced soon.

Other information relevant to the ASC

Professor Stephen Davis has been elected as President-Elect of the World Stroke Organisation. He will take up office during the WSO in Brasilia in October 2012.

The next Annual Scientific Meeting of the SSA will be a combined meeting with SMART strokes and will be held in Sydney from 29-31 August 2012.

The 2013 ASM of the SSA will be held at the Darwin Convention Centre from 31 July 2013 to 2 August 2012.

Tasmanian Stroke Network

The Tasmanian Stroke Network is represented by Helen Castley.

Achievements and / or activities related to Acute stroke care

Despite challenges in the Tasmanian Health system over the last 12 months we have managed to maintain organised and co-ordinated stroke care in the major metropolitan centres. The rapid-access TIA clinic has continued to develop with more opportunity to review patients.

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

We continue to build relations between the acute stroke unit team and the rehabilitation units. This has resulted in earlier referrals and transfer of patients to the rehabilitation setting.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

Currently planning a second Tasmania Stroke Services Workshop which enables clinicians caring for stroke patients to meet and discuss clinical issues and processes of care.

Achievements and / or activities related to Data in stroke

Continue to work towards enrolling in AuSCR.

Victorian Stroke Clinical Network (VSCN)

The VSCN is represented by Helen Dewey and Janelle Devereux.

Achievements and/or activities related to acute stroke care

- **Victoria Dysphagia Screening Model (VDSM)**

The Victoria dysphagia screening project identified and endorsed the ASSIST screening tool and has coupled this with an implementation plan and a training and competency package to create the VDSM. The VDSM has been piloted at 10 sites across Victoria and will be available for extended dissemination in quarter four of 2011-12.

- **Telemedicine**

- The Victorian Stroke Telemedicine (VST) project has been implemented in Bendigo. This \$1.2 million initiative utilises a telemedicine solution to provide specialist neurology support from a consortium of metropolitan Melbourne based neurologists to provide access to thrombolysis at Bendigo Health.
- Broadband-Enabled Innovation Programme (BEIP)
The Florey Neurosciences Institute in collaboration with the Department of Health via the Victorian Stroke Clinical Network has successfully made it to the next stage of the BEIP grant application process to extend the VST to the whole of the Loddon Mallee region. A business case for the project is currently being submitted, which will be considered for the third round of the application process.

- **Facilitators**

Four facilitators remain in post in Mildura, Northern Health, Shepparton and Albury Wodonga. All four sites plan to implement new stroke models of care, including stroke unit care and access to thrombolysis by the end of the financial year. The regional stroke coordinator continues to provide support to the four facilitators as well as undertaking a stroke education programme, outlined later in the report.

- **Regional Transfer Guidance**

A recommendation report has been developed to facilitate state and regional collaboration and coordination of stroke services to ensure all stroke patients receive timely and appropriate evidenced based stroke care. Local working groups are in the process of agreeing regional transfer pathways and protocols to complete this work.

- **Roadshows**

The clinical lead and program manager for the VSCN have commenced a programme of site visits to regional health services to provide support for local stroke service development and improvement, the development of regional transfer agreements and to provide a broad education programme to medical, nursing and allied health staff, including students/trainees.

- **Evaluation**

A second phase evaluation is being undertaken to describe and highlight any improvements in the provision of evidence-based practices following the implementation of VSCN plans and initiatives at eight health services where facilitators were put in place. The final outcome of the evaluation will be available at the end of the current financial year.

- **New Projects**

A series of new projects have been funded that will commence in the coming months. These include:

- Bass Coast Regional Health stroke project, which aims to undertake a gap analysis comparing current service provision for stroke patients against the recommendations in the *Stroke care strategy for Victoria* and the clinical guidelines to inform service planning.
- Echuca stroke project, which aims to implement a sustainable model of care for stroke that is consistent with evidenced based care.
- Kingston stroke unit project, which aims to develop and implement an improved model of care on a dedicated unit for patients accessing stroke rehabilitation at Southern Health.
- GP Liaison project, which aims to develop a change strategy to improve discharge practice for stroke/TIA patients at five major public hospitals.

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

- A survey was undertaken of Victorian physicians who provide rehabilitation services concerning admission practices for patients with severe stroke. The final report will be used to inform improvements in access to evidence based rehabilitation.
- A Stroke and Sexuality project has been funded to implement a workshop series to coach subacute services through the process of implementing Guideline 8.5: sexuality and stroke.
- A new workplan for the 2012-13 year is currently in development, which will be informed by a review of progress against the *Stroke care strategy for Victoria*. The VSCN has committed to focus new work areas and developments in the rehabilitation end of the pathway, which includes both subacute and community services.

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

- The Peninsula Health Community Gym Program has been funded, which aims to implement and evaluate a community circuit training program at five health services in Victoria.
- A project to pilot and evaluate the Chronic Stroke Toolkit, an evidenced based guideline for the management of chronic stroke in the community rehabilitation setting, has been funded by the VSCN and will commence in the coming months.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

- An “Enhancing Stroke Care Forum” showcasing the findings of 11 funded projects was held in September 2011.
- A regional outreach stroke education project to deliver monthly education sessions connecting metropolitan and regional clinicians has commenced. The aim is to support regional clinicians to consistently provide appropriate and evidenced based stroke care, support the development of regional transfer frameworks and to enhance relationships within the Victorian stroke community. A face to face meeting is being held on 30 March to test the planned model of delivery, which will then be implemented from April 2012.
- A new work programme for primary care education is being developed working with Medicare Locals and GP training organisations.

Achievements and/or activities related to Data in stroke

- The “McKinsey Healthtracker” data initiative commenced in Victoria in 2011. Further work is being undertaken locally to analyse the data to help inform the setting of priorities for the 2012-13 financial year.
- Seed funding has been made available to fund up to 10 Victorian health services via a submission process to fund necessary IT changes to allow direct uploading of patient management system data to the Australian Stroke Clinical Registry (AuSCR). This will facilitate participation in the registry and completeness of data entry at individual health services.

Achievements and / or activities related to E-health in stroke

- See comments above regarding telemedicine

Western Australia

Western Australia is represented by Andrew Granger and Jacqueline Ancliffe.

Achievements and / or activities related to Rehabilitation stroke care

The Bentley Hospital Stroke Rehabilitation Service has opened for South Metro Perth. This establishes a Stroke Rehabilitation Unit, Stroke Outpatients Service and Stroke Early Supported Discharge service. Funding for all of WA Metropolitan stroke rehabilitation services is via COAG funding which expires in June 2013, it has not been possible to get a commitment from the Department of Health to continue funding these so that employed staff can be retained and services continued. The current advice is that it is ‘possible’ that the stroke rehabilitation services will continue. No other stroke specific rehabilitation services for patients over 65 - inpatient, ambulatory care or outpatient- exist in WA outside of these 2 COAG funded projects.

Achievements and / or activities related to Community stroke care

There is a Department of Health review of stroke ambulatory care services underway. This appropriately aims to expand services in terms of geography and age access. There is a real threat that this will occur via 'conversion' of the early, intensive, inpatient substitution stroke specific service into a generic, non-stroke specific service which is less intensive and not truly inpatient substitution. The initial meetings did not include anybody working in stroke rehabilitation; the next phase of meetings has been deferred until April at this stage.

Achievements and / or activities related to Workforce, training and professional development in stroke

Nil. WA still has no Stroke Network, no infrastructure for training or education, and no commitment to either.

Other information relevant to the ASC

Late in 2011, the unfavourable WA NSF Audit results provided an impetus to change. At the same time, the WA Stroke Model of Care was being completed outlining the official plan for WA stroke care. Clinicians in WA became aware of the completion of this document when advised by colleagues in Melbourne, although I'm not aware it's actually been sighted. The document despite multiple submissions fails to mention any commitment regarding how the priorities outlined might be implemented, specifically a resurrection in some form of the WA Stroke Network. A well publicised meeting was held with 3 stroke clinicians and 3 senior Department of Health officials to discuss ways to progress this. None of those 3 DOH staff now work within the department, although it is rumoured that the Department has recently approached SA Network leaders for their local perspective. The plan to have some form of commitment to improvement of stroke services in WA by January 2012 is presumably still in development.