

## What is the Australian Stroke Coalition (ASC)?

The National Stroke Foundation (NSF) and Stroke Society of Australasia (SSA) established the ASC on 11 July 2008. The ASC brings together representatives from groups and organisations working in the stroke field, such as clinical networks and professional associations/colleges. This group works together to tackle agreed priorities to improve stroke care, reduce duplication among groups and strengthen the voice for stroke care at a national and state level.

## What does the ASC do?

The ASC provides a critical communication link between relevant organisations and their members regarding stroke care in Australia. We aim:

- To develop a communication strategy to link ongoing and new stroke initiatives at a state and national level.
- To improve the delivery of clinical care across the entire stroke care continuum.
- To develop a set of national priorities for stroke care based on gaps identified in the national audit and other data sources.
- To determine a coordinated strategy by which to improve these priority areas.
- To promote the activities of the coalition through its members and other avenues.

We have identified 6 priority areas:

1. Acute stroke including TIA, rt-PA and stroke unit care
2. Rehabilitation
3. Community
4. Workforce, training and professional development
5. Data
6. E-health.

## Current Projects

### *Stroke rehabilitation assessment tool for acute settings*

The ASC has determined that every person who has a stroke will be assessed for their rehabilitation needs.

The ASC Rehabilitation working group commenced a project to develop a nationally consistent assessment process for post-acute rehabilitation needs. In this project we aim to document a recommended process and develop a tool to facilitate the assessment of stroke survivors' rehabilitation needs while still in the acute setting.

The project team firstly assessed current practice and collated evidence from Australia and overseas for various approaches to facilitate rehabilitation. We piloted a survey in January 2010 and then disseminated the survey nationally in April 2010. The survey included questions about the processes used for assessing a stroke survivor's rehabilitation needs beyond the acute setting. It was sent to all sites that participated in

the 2009 National Stroke Audit Acute Services and answered "yes" to the question "Does your hospital routinely assess all patients for the need for further rehabilitation?" We collated the results and drafted a report.

Secondly, we conducted a literature review to establish broad evidence for indicators for rehabilitation and the best practice models of service delivery.

Using the information from these two sources and the input of the expert working group, the project team developed an assessment process incorporating a decision-making pathway with supporting assessment tools. The assessment tool is now being piloted at a number of sites across Australia. We began evaluation of the results at some sites. We anticipate that the pilot evaluation will be completed by 30 September 2011. Depending on the results of the evaluation, we will begin further piloting or implementation of the tool later in 2011.

For more information, contact ASC secretariat Leah Wright ([lwright@strokefoundation.com.au](mailto:lwright@strokefoundation.com.au)) or current Rehabilitation working group chairperson, Dr Susan Hillier ([susan.hillier@unisa.edu.au](mailto:susan.hillier@unisa.edu.au)).

### *My Stroke Care Plan*

Another ASC priority is to ensure that all patients experience a well-coordinated and supported discharge and that stroke survivors have access to appropriate care that meets their needs.

We piloted 'My Stroke Care Plan' in a number of public and private hospitals across Australia. We completed evaluation of the health care professional feedback on the pilot and have begun consumer evaluation. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation, further piloting or implementation will occur later in 2011.

It is likely the care plan will form one component of a new comprehensive resource for stroke survivors and carers which will be finalised and released by the NSF in 2011.

The new hard-copy consumer resource will provide evidence-based information that meets the needs of the stroke survivor and carers at Day 1, point of hospital discharge and whilst living in the community. The resource will:

- increase understanding of stroke and treatments
- encourage and facilitate survivor/ carer participation in decision making
- provide practical strategies for managing life after stroke.

For more information, contact ASC secretariat Leah Wright ([lwright@strokefoundation.com.au](mailto:lwright@strokefoundation.com.au)) or Rebecca Naylor ([rnaylor@strokefoundation.com.au](mailto:rnaylor@strokefoundation.com.au))

## Stroke Specific Education Framework

The ASC has identified Workforce, Professional Development and Training as one its priority areas. Currently, Australia currently has no nationally agreed strategy or framework for stroke education needs.

The ASC has developed a Stroke Specific Education Framework (SSEF) which aims to:

- Assist education providers to develop consistent stroke training, programs and curriculum for all stroke clinicians.
- Increase the number of stroke clinicians participating in recognised training that furthers their specialisation in stroke.
- Encourage delivery of evidence based stroke care as outlined in the national stroke guidelines by encouraging stroke specific education.

The SSEF is based around the Stroke Care Continuum and relates to the 14 elements of care. It was developed to promote strong inter-professional education and training and those who use the framework are encouraged to apply the framework in that context.

The SSEF was completed and an implementation plan has been disseminated to promote its use o. We also plan to create a medical implementation project team and an allied health or nursing implementation project team to assist in enabling the uptake of the SSEF by professional organisations.

For more information, contact ASC secretariat ([lwright@strokefoundation.com.au](mailto:lwright@strokefoundation.com.au)) or current Workforce, training and professional development working group chairperson, Andrew Lee ([Andrew.Lee@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Lee@health.sa.gov.au)).

## Future Projects

The ASC is finalising the planning and project teams for two acute projects:

- Evidence-based position statement on models of care for transient ischaemic attack (TIA). The aim is to assist in the implementation of the NHMRC Guideline recommendations for the management of patients with transient ischaemic attack (TIA) in the local setting by developing a national consensus statement outlining evidence-based best practice models of care for TIA.
- Practical guide to implementing evidence-based best practice clinical stroke care in the first 48 hours post-stroke. The aim is to provide an implementation guide to assist clinicians to implement evidence-based best practice in the first 48 hours of stroke care.

For more information, contact ASC secretariat Leah Wright ([lwright@strokefoundation.com.au](mailto:lwright@strokefoundation.com.au))

## Who is the ASC?

*The core members of the ASC are:*

Stroke Society of Australasia, National Stroke Foundation, Stroke Services NSW, QLD Statewide Stroke Network, Victorian Stroke Care Network, SA Stroke Network, Tasmanian Stroke Unit Network, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia, Australian Physiotherapy Association, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, Dieticians Association of Australia, Occupational Therapy Australia, Royal College of Nursing Australia, Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, Speech Pathology Australia, Council of Ambulance Authorities, Stroke Consumers.

*The representatives of the member organisations are:*

- A/Prof Julie Bernhardt, Australian Physiotherapy Association
- Mr Greg Cadigan, Queensland Statewide Stroke Network
- Dr Helen Castley, Tasmanian Stroke Unit Network
- Dr Anthony Cross, Australasian College of Emergency Medicine
- Prof Chris Bladin, Victorian Stroke Clinical Network
- Ms Sonia Denisenko, Victorian Stroke Clinical Network
- A/Prof Steven Faux, Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine
- Dr Howard Flavell, Northern Territory Clinical Network
- Ms Pip Galland, Stroke Services NSW
- Dr Erin Godecke, Stroke Society of Australasia
- Dr Kong Goh, Queensland Clinical Network
- A/Prof Hugh Grantham, Council of Ambulance Authorities
- Dr Louise Gustafsson, Occupational Therapy Australia
- Dr Susan Hiller, SA Stroke Network
- Ms Eleanor Horton, Consumer Representative
- Dr Erin Lalor, National Stroke Foundation
- Dr Andrew Lee, SA Stroke Network
- Ms Sandra Lever, Royal College of Nursing Australia
- Prof Chris Levi, Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- Mr Mark Longworth, Stroke Services NSW
- A/Prof Mark Parsons, Stroke Society of Australasia
- Ms Amy Lewis, Dietitians Association of Australia
- Mr Chris Price, National Stroke Foundation
- Prof Mandy Thrift, Stroke Society of Australasia
- Ms Christina Wilson, Speech Pathology Australia

## SSA Conference presentations

Oral papers detailing the work of the ASC will be presented at the SSA Conference. A *“Comprehensive assessment for stroke rehabilitation: A new Australian model”* will be presented by Dr Susan Hillier. *“A nationally agreed stroke-specific education framework: Let’s use it”* will be presented by Dr Andrew Lee. A poster entitled *“Why patients are not receiving stroke unit care: Barriers and facilitators to stroke unit access?”* will be presented by Dr Erin Godecke and Leah Wright.