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Thursday 11 May 2017

UK set for stroke epidemic

- Burden of Stroke in Europe report predicts startling growth for stroke rates -

The number of strokes across the UK is likely to rise by almost half (44%)⁽ⁱ⁾ in the next 20 years, according to a new report published today [Thursday 11 May 2017] by the Stroke Alliance for Europe (SAFE) and the Stroke Association.

The Burden of Stroke in Europe is a comprehensive analysis of 35 European countries, carried out by King's College London, and is published to mark European Stroke Awareness Day and the UK's national awareness month: Make May Purple for Stroke. Researchers are warning that throughout Europe, the number of strokes could rise dramatically by 2035 due to our ageing population.

Currently in the UK there are 1.2 million people living with the effects of stroke, and there are over 100,000 strokes every year.

The report findings also reveal that by 2035;

- the number of new strokes across Europe is likely to increase by a third (34%)⁽ⁱⁱ⁾, and in the UK, this figure could jump by nearly half (44%)
- the number of stroke survivors living in the UK is expected to rise by a third (32%)⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.

Juliet Bouverie, Chief Executive of the Stroke Association, said: "The number of stroke survivors is set to rise by almost one million people, and that number in the UK is expected to increase by over 30%: that is one of the largest increases in Europe. These are shocking figures, and if they are borne out, health services will face a formidable challenge in tackling a stroke epidemic.

"There are alarming variations in delivering even the basic levels of treatment and care for stroke patients, such as access to stroke units and thrombolysis, not just across Europe, but across the UK. Without reorganisation, stroke patients are less likely to receive the treatment and care which will save their lives and reduce

disability. This could ultimately lead to greater costs on their Governments and economies.”

As part of its recommendations, SAFE is calling for each EU member state to have a national stroke strategy, actively supported and sponsored by Government that covers the whole stroke pathway. This should include awareness, prevention, treatment and long-term support.

Ms Bouverie continued: “While it is good news that many more people are now surviving a stroke, we also know that their needs are not currently being met after they’ve received initial life-saving treatment. In England, our stroke strategy ends in 2107, leaving us as the only UK nation without a plan for stroke. There are big issues still to tackle in basic stroke treatment, care and long-term support which demand Government commitment and a national plan which prioritises stroke and stroke survivors. This General Election, we are calling on candidates to pledge their support to our new plan. Visit stroke.org.uk/GE17.”

The Burden of Stroke in Europe report’s researchers caution that accurate comparisons between countries are extremely difficult, and advise that their predictions for the future have a significant level of uncertainty. Professor Christopher McKeivitt, an author of the report from King’s College London, said: “Our report shows that your chances of getting the best quality care when you first have a stroke vary widely across Europe, and within individual European states. It also shows that we know very little about what care stroke survivors get after discharge from hospital.

“As the population ages, more people will have a stroke, and more will survive with long-term disabilities. We need to ensure better access to the best acute stroke care for all; and we need to focus efforts on improving support for stroke survivors in the months and years after they are sent home from hospital.”

For more information about *the Burden of Stroke in Europe*, please visit www.strokeeurope.eu. For more information about the Stroke Association’s manifesto, visit stroke.org.uk/GE17.

Ends

For interviews with Stroke Association spokespeople and case studies, please contact the Stroke Association's media team on 020 7566 1500 or email press@stroke.org.uk

For urgent out of hours media enquiries only please call 07799 436 008. ISDN facilities available.

For interviews with [insert name of spokesperson] at King's College London, please contact [insert relevant contact details].

Contact person in SAFE: Jelena Misita, SAFE Awareness and Advocacy Manager, mobile +381 60 3223 700 or email jelena.misita@safestroke.eu

Sponsors of the Burden of Stroke Report



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Notes to editors

- (i) Incidence estimate: 43,326 strokes in the UK in 2015, 39.3 strokes per 100,000 inhabitants annually, age- and sex-adjusted. This is projected to rise to 62,366 strokes in 2035
 - (ii) Incidence estimate: 613,148 strokes in the European Union in 2015. This is projected to rise to 819,771 in 2035
 - (iii) The number of stroke survivors in the UK is projected to rise from **XX** in 2015 to 193,861 in 2035
- The term 'burden of stroke' covers long-term disability, death, direct healthcare costs and informal care costs as a result of stroke

About the Stroke Association

- A stroke is a brain attack which happens when the blood supply to the brain is cut off, caused by a clot or bleeding in the brain. There are more than 100,000 strokes in the UK each year; that is around one stroke every five minutes. There are over 1.2 million people in the UK living with the effects of stroke.
- Stroke Association is a charity. We believe in life after stroke and together we can conquer stroke. We work directly with stroke survivors and their families and carers, with health and social care professionals and with scientists and researchers. We campaign to improve stroke care and support people to make the best recovery they can. We fund research to develop new treatments and

ways of preventing stroke. The Stroke Helpline (0303 303 3100) provides information and support on stroke. More information can be found at www.stroke.org.uk

[Insert Kings College London boilerplate]