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# NEWSLETTER

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## Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of the SCTNI Newsletter, which aims to update you on SCTNI and member activities, upcoming events, resources, and opportunities of interest. This issue of the Newsletter includes recent SCTNI activities, publications and resources (including from SCTNI members), and some upcoming events, including a [save the date for the SCTNI Annual Conference 2019, 22 November 2019.](#)

We are keen to hear about your work, announcements, events, or anything that you think can be shared with SCTNI members. Please forward information to us [by email](#) and we will ensure it is included in a future issue.

And if you are a Twitter user, please [connect with us here!](#)

Best wishes,

SCTNI Team

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## SCTNI News

### SCTNI at ESOC

The European Stroke Organisation Conference (ESOC) was held in Milan from 22-24 May this year, with many SCTNI members travelling to present, network, and take in all that ESOC has to offer. The conference is the premier European forum for stroke research and rapidly becoming the world's foremost platform for the release of major trial data. In addition to the general conference programme, workshops were held in advance, including that of the ESO Trials Alliance (ESOTA) and the ESO Women Initiative for Stroke in Europe (ESO WISE). The theme of

the ESOTA was closer collaboration on stroke trials in Europe. The first half of the workshop focused on what is currently happening in the ESOTA networks in the Netherlands, Spain, UK, Switzerland and Ireland, with **Prof Peter Kelly** and **Prof Anne Hickey** presenting on current activities in Ireland. The second half focused on supporting young investigators and building closer collaboration.

The theme of the ESO WISE workshop was on promoting gender equity in academic stroke research and clinical trial leadership. Moderated by ESO Executive Committee members Dr Else Charlotte Sandset (Oslo University Hospital) and Prof Valeria Caso (University of Perugia Stroke Unit), speakers at the workshop focused on careers in clinical trials, the lack of female principal investigators in acute stroke trials, as well as a presentation by Prof Kelly on initiatives to promote and support women in stroke research. The workshop follows on from a recently published article ([see here](#)) in the European Stroke journal that assessed the current status of women in the European Stroke Organisation, and to explore the change in sex differences after the introduction in 2014 of focused approaches to address disparities.



## CONVINCE

Issue 7 of the CONVINCE newsletter is now available. Among the topics covered, the newsletter reports on the countdown to 1000 patients randomised, reaching the 100th recruitment site in June, and a profile of ZKSE Essen team in Germany who navigated the Dublin Project Team through the complex ethics and regulatory requirements for Germany. The newsletter is [available here](#).

## SCTNI Strategy

The mission of the SCTNI is to promote collaboration among stroke researchers and to facilitate engagement on investigator-led stroke clinical trials research in Ireland. A Strategy document has been developed to guide SCTNI activities in support of this mission. The Strategy document sets out key features of the SCTNI and its operations, including its mission, governance, research, sustainability, and inclusion of new projects. Following review by SCTNI operating groups, Network Executive Committee members, and Network Research Nurses, the SCTNI Strategy is in the process of being finalised and made available on the [SCTNI website](#) in the coming weeks.

## SCTNI Clinicians Operating Group

Following on from their first meeting in May, the SCTNI Clinicians Operating Group (COG) are planning their next meeting to coincide with the [Irish Gerontological Society 67th Annual and Scientific Meeting](#), 26-28 Sep 2019 in Cork. Further details about the meeting will be communicated to the COG membership, and an update on the meeting will be provided in the fourth issue of this newsletter.



## Publications & Resources

### **Per-Pass Analysis of Thrombus Composition in Patients With Acute Ischemic Stroke Undergoing Mechanical Thrombectomy**

**Prof John Thornton** and colleagues in Beaumont Hospital, GMIT, and RCSI recently published a paper in the journal *Stroke* that describes findings from their study examining: i) the composition of thrombus fragments retrieved with each pass of a device during the thrombectomy procedure; and ii) the per-pass composition compared with procedural and clinical data including angiographic outcome and stroke etiology. This novel study suggests that thrombus fragments retrieved in individual passes differed significantly in their histopathologic characteristics. Fragments retrieved in passes 1 and 2 were associated with a much lower fibrin composition in comparison to fragments retrieved in passes 3 to 6. The insights gained in this study of per-pass thrombus composition may be useful in determining the treatment strategy as the case evolves and to inform the development of new technologies to retrieve difficult thrombi in a fewer number of passes. The paper is [available here](#).

### **Aspirin for primary prevention of stroke in individuals without cardiovascular disease**

The benefits of aspirin for primary prevention of stroke are uncertain. Colleagues at the **CRC-NUI Galway** performed a cumulative meta-analysis of trials investigating aspirin for primary prevention of cardiovascular disease with a focus on stroke. The study, published in the *International Stroke Journal* and led by **Dr Conor Judge**, assessed the effects of aspirin on non-fatal stroke, hemorrhagic stroke, non-fatal myocardial infarction, all-cause mortality, cardiovascular mortality, major gastrointestinal bleeding, and an analysis of net clinical effect, in populations without a history of clinical or subclinical cardiovascular disease. The meta-analysis reports no benefit of aspirin for primary stroke prevention. The paper can be [accessed here](#).

### **Plaque inflammation imaging using PET predicts early stroke recurrence**

As part of the BIOVASC study, **Prof Peter Kelly** and collaborators in Ireland, Spain, Canada, France, and Singapore published a paper recently in *Stroke* showing that imaging of plaque inflammation using PET is a strong predictor which identifies patients with carotid stenosis at risk of early recurrent stroke. This provides a proof of concept that inflammation is directly involved in thrombo-embolic events in patients with atherosclerosis and stroke, and further supports the rationale for CONVINCE. The paper can be [accessed here](#).

### **Systematic review & meta-analysis of the prevalence of CIND in the first year post-stroke**

Published in the June issue of the *European Stroke Journal*, **Dr Eithne Sexton** and colleagues in the StrokeCog study conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of the prevalence of cognitive impairment no dementia (CIND) within one year post-stroke. This meta-analysis found a pooled prevalence of CIND in the first year after stroke of 38% (95% CI: 32–43%). In addition to being a useful guide for clinicians, this prevalence estimate will be used in the StrokeCog epidemiological modelling platform. The model will apply this estimate and those from other

sources to real-world populations to estimate the number of people with post-stroke CIND, and make projections into the future. This will inform policy and planning for future service provision, and facilitate cost-effectiveness analysis. The paper can be [accessed here](#).

### **Cerebral microbleeds and stroke risk after ischaemic stroke or transient ischaemic attack**

Cerebral microbleeds are a neuroimaging biomarker of stroke risk. The Microbleeds International Collaborative Network, which includes Irish collaboration (**Dr Derek Hayden, Prof Peter Kelly, and Prof David Williams**), recently published a paper in the *Lancet Neurology* that aimed to establish whether a large burden of cerebral microbleeds or particular anatomical patterns of cerebral microbleeds can identify ischaemic stroke or transient ischaemic attack patients at higher absolute risk of intracranial haemorrhage than ischaemic stroke. The Network's large-scale pooled analysis of individual patient data confirms that, in patients with recent ischaemic stroke or transient ischaemic attack treated with antithrombotic drugs, cerebral microbleeds are associated with the subsequent risks of symptomatic intracranial haemorrhage and ischaemic stroke; as cerebral microbleed burden increases, the relative risk (aHR) of intracranial haemorrhage rises more steeply than that of ischaemic stroke. The most important new finding is that, regardless of cerebral microbleed burden and distribution (ie, mixed, deep, or lobar), or the type of antithrombotic treatment received (oral anticoagulants or antiplatelet therapy), the absolute risk of ischaemic stroke is consistently substantially higher than that of intracranial haemorrhage. The paper can be [accessed here](#).

### **Adding stroke to the political agenda in Europe**

On the first anniversary of the launch of the European Stroke Action Plan (ESAP) 2018–2030 - a collaborative project by the European Stroke Organisation (ESO) and the patient organisation Stroke Alliance For Europe - the journal *Lancet Neurology* has published an editorial reflecting on progress. The editorial concludes by noting: "To meet the ambitious targets set for 2030, European policy makers need to recognise the need for and support the development of coherent stroke care pathways", arguing for European policy makers to add stroke to the European political agenda. The article can be [accessed here](#).



## **Upcoming Events & Training**

### **Date for your diary: SCTNI Annual Conference 2019**

Building on last year's conference looking at new advances in stroke treatment, the 2nd SCTNI Annual Conference will take place on 22 November 2019 in the Richard Carmichael Lecture Theatre, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin. The SCTNI are in the process of organising the schedule. Confirmed speakers include **Prof Pierre Amarencu** (Paris-Diderot Sorbonne University & Bichat Hospital), **Prof Sarah Pendlebury** (Oxford University & Consultant Physician at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), **Prof Nikola Sprigg** (Nottingham University &

Honorary Consultant Physician for Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust), and **Prof Phil White** (Newcastle University & Consultant Neuroradiologist). We will keep you updated through this newsletter, [our website](#), and [Twitter profile](#) as the schedule is finalised. For now, please mark the date in your diary!

### **Good Clinical Practice training and refresher courses**

A range of good clinical practice training and refresher courses are held at different hospital sites around the country. These courses focus on rules and regulations, principles of good clinical practice, and highlight essential documents. The upcoming events and training section of the SCTNI website aims to provide a one-stop-shop detailing when and where these and other training opportunities are taking place. [You can view the list here](#).

### **International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference**

Building on the success of 2017, the 5th International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference takes place 6-8 Oct 2019 in Brighton, UK, and promises to be a unique opportunity for those working in clinical trials to meet and discuss the current issues within trials and trials methodology. The event will showcase the very latest in trials methodology research and offer plenty of valuable opportunities for networking. The Conference will also mark 10 years since the Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research began in 2009. Further details about the conference are [available on the website here](#).

### **EUPATI Patient Engagement Training for Researchers**

The European Patients' Academy on Therapeutic Innovation (EUPATI) is the leading programme providing education and training to increase the capacity and capability of patient advocates to understand and contribute to medicines research and development, and to improve the availability of medical information for the health interested public. There is currently no standardised training for professionals working in patient relations and engagement leading to too much on the job training, diverse approaches and lack of knowledge transfer, both institutional and experiential. EUPATI provides education to fill this gap and to ensure the acceleration of effective patient engagement in Europe. The next training event is scheduled for 21 November 2019, and will take place in Brussels. Further details on registration, agenda, and learning outcomes [are available here](#).

### **ESO-WSO Conference 2020**

The European Stroke Organisation (ESO) is a pan-European society of stroke researchers and physicians, national and regional stroke societies and lay organisations that was founded in December 2007. The World Stroke Organization (WSO) has a mission to reduce the global burden of stroke through prevention, treatment and long term care. WSO is approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a non-governmental organisation for official relations. Join the ESO and the WSO for their jointly organised stroke conference in Vienna, 12-15 May 2020. This is your opportunity to be part of a new level of collaboration across Europe and the World. You can [keep up to date here](#) with the programme and important developments.



## In other news...

### School children conducting randomised trials

Primary school children in Ireland have run and presented their own randomised trials through the innovative Schools Teaching Awareness About Randomised Trials (START) competition, which is now in its fourth year. The START competition aims to help students become aware of the randomised clinical trial process, rather than seeking to answer a groundbreaking question: pick a simple, easy to answer question, but use the proper steps of a clinical trial to answer it. [In this article](#), Sarah Chapman (Cochrane UK) describes what students have achieved, and why this matters.

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