

FOREWORD

The European Stroke Organisation (ESO) represents a pan-European collaboration, formed in December 2007 from a merger between the European Stroke Council (ESC) and the European Stroke Initiative (EUSI). Its membership consists of stroke researchers, national and regional stroke societies and others with an interest in stroke.

The ESO has an important role in research, teaching and training of current and future stroke professionals. Part of this remit is the publication of a regularly updated set of European guidelines for the management of stroke. Published in Spring 2008 the current ESO Guidelines represent an update of the 2003 EUSI Guidelines. They cover the whole spectrum of ischaemic stroke, from teaching and awareness, to stroke unit and stroke management strategies, primary and secondary prevention, acute treatment and rehabilitation.

The rehabilitation guideline group was chaired by Professor Kennedy R. Lees (Glasgow, UK) and co-chaired by Danilo Tomi (Rome, Italy). In order to avoid bias or conflict of interest, the ESO selected guideline chairs with no major involvement in the clinical trials or studies discussed by their respective group. The other members of the group represent important researchers in rehabilitation medicine from a variety of professional backgrounds and European Institutions: Stefano Paolucci (Rome, Italy); Juhani Sivenius (Kuopio, Finland); Katharina Stibrant Sunnerhagen (Gothenburg, Sweden); and Marion F. Walker (Nottingham, UK).

The group produced a comprehensive overview of current research in the field of post-stroke rehabilitation. For reasons of space and to maintain consistency with the other parts of the guideline, the authors' original manuscript was edited and condensed to produce the final published ESO guideline. Although happy with the content of the final guideline, the writing group felt that the full document should be made available also, as detailed reviews in the subject area are lacking.

The manuscript presented here does not differ from the guideline in its recommendations, but offers greater background and depth on the topics discussed and, importantly, highlights areas for future research. It is a larger manuscript than would often be published, but this reflects the scope of the piece. Rather than compromise the content, a decision for full publication as a special supplement issue was made with the Editorial board of the Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine. We recognize the importance of avoiding duplicate publication. The presented manuscript differs sufficiently in content to warrant separate publication. Some content, such as "key points", will be similar to the ESO guideline; any such instances are acknowledged.

Thus, this manuscript represents an expanded version of the recent ESO guidelines for stroke rehabilitation.

The original ESO guideline is available online at the following URL: <http://www.eso-stroke.org/recommendations.php?cid=9>.

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