

The Stroke Program, Edmonton Zone (SPEZ) quarterly newsletter provides current information and updates to healthcare providers working within stroke care.

FEATURE EDITION: Highlights from the 2014 Canadian Stroke Congress

Heart & Stroke Foundation Launches Updated Signs of Stroke Campaign

At the 2014 Canadian Stroke Congress, the Heart and Stroke Foundation announced plans to launch a new, national approach to recognize the signs of stroke. The campaign formally launched on December 3rd:



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Too many Canadians do not recognize the signs of stroke, nor know what to do when they see or experience them.¹ “FAST provides an easy way to remember the major signs of stroke and reminds people to take action as quickly as possible.”²

When Canadians seek **immediate** medical attention when they experience or witness the signs of stroke:

- more people will be eligible for ‘clot-busting’ therapy
- patients will experience improved outcomes, and
- those at high risk for stroke will be referred to stroke prevention clinics³

Please share the new [campaign](#) as widely as possible with your patients, family, friends, colleagues and coworkers, and help anyone experiencing or witnessing a stroke to recognize the signs and act **FAST**.

1. http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iklQLcMWJtE/b.3483937/k.86D8/Stroke_Stroke_signs.htm?utm_campaign=offline&utm_source=fast&utm_medium=vanity

2. Heart & Stroke Foundation. December 3, 2014 Media Release. Heart and Stroke Foundation launches new campaign to help Canadians recognize signs of stroke and act “FAST”.

3. Heart & Stroke Foundation, Canada. Updated Signs of Stroke Public Awareness Campaign: Moving forward with a FAST approach. Educational Resource for Healthcare Professionals. December 2014.

The 5th annual Canadian Stroke Congress, a joint initiative of the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Stroke Consortium, took place in Vancouver October 4th - 7th.

Key messages from Congress 2014 included:

- [Rural hospitals replicate experiences of big city stroke care](#)
- [Stroke patients past the 90-day danger period remain at high risk for repeat event for years](#)
- [Innovative stroke patient management system cuts hospital bed usage by more than 25 per cent](#)
- [Code Stroke on the Ward: Study finds care lags for people who have a stroke in hospital](#)
- [Too many stroke patients miss out on the window to regain crucial functions](#)

Participants had the opportunity to hear speakers address these issues and more, during four days of pre-conference and conference sessions.

Pre-Conference Workshops

The three pre-conference workshops, which ran during the weekend preceding Congress, included The National Stroke Course, National Stroke Rehabilitation Course and the National Stroke Nursing Course.

This year, for the first time ever, physicians were offered two streams of programming in the National Stroke Course – one for Neurologists, Neurology Trainees and other Specialists interested in stroke, and another geared to Family and Emergency Physicians. Dr. Ashfaq Shuaib, Director of the Stroke Program, University of Alberta Hospital (UAH), and Dr. Thomas Jeerakathil, Stroke Neurologist, UAH, served as Chairs during the Sunday morning sessions, with Dr. Shuaib also presenting current guidelines for Antithrombotic Treatment. On Sunday afternoon, Dr. Laura Gioia, UAH Stroke Fellow, spoke on “Everything We Know About Treatment of (Intracerebral Hemorrhage) ICH”.

The National Stroke Rehabilitation Course is designed for practitioners who work with stroke patients to promote recovery of lost function. Speakers reviewed

current approaches for long-term community based rehabilitation, presented evidence-based interventions related to visual perception, motor and long-term recovery, and described the role of technology in stroke rehabilitation. Through a combination of plenary sessions and smaller workshops, participants learned about evidence-based practices, and were presented with case studies of stroke patients. Gail Elton-Smith, Stroke Services Coordinator, presented the Edmonton Zone “[Connections](#)” project during the “Brag and Steal” Session. The “Brag and Steal” session provides delegates with a five minute opportunity to share new projects, which other programs may be interested in replicating.

The National Stroke Nursing Course offers nurses and other interested health professionals opportunities to learn about applying evidence-based research in the care of patients with stroke. Dr. Elizabeth Gilchrist, a neuropsychologist at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, participated in the opening session of the National Stroke Nursing Course, this year entitled “Building a Stroke Nursing Toolkit”. Dr. Gilchrist presented nurses with information on “Monitoring Mood and Cognition in Patients after Stroke”, an important theme throughout Congress this year. Sessions in the nursing course were intended to assist stroke nurses to create a toolkit of screening, assessment and monitoring tools to care for stroke patients across a variety of practice settings.

Congress Program

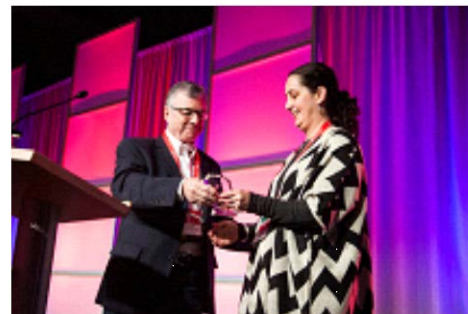
On Monday afternoon, Congress attendees had the opportunity to learn about important emerging knowledge in stroke care. The Edmonton Zone was represented by three speakers at this session.

Dr. Thomas Jeerakathil, Stroke Neurologist, Medical lead and Co-Chair of the [Stroke Action Plan](#), presented on how “Stroke Unit Equivalent Care (SUEC) and Early Supported Discharge (ESD) in Rural and Small Urban Centers Could be Highly Cost-effective: The Alberta Stroke Action Plan (ASAP)”. Their work has demonstrated that mean length of stay (LOS) could be reduced by 20% if 1000 more stroke patients per year received SUEC. LOS in acute care and rehab hospitals would decline by 26% and 17 fewer patients would be admitted to LTC per year if ESD saw 214 more patients per year.

Colleen Taralson, Stroke Services Coordinator, discussed “The Expansion of Telestroke Across the Continuum of Care”. Colleen provided an overview of the [Canadian Telestroke Action Collaborative](#) and introduced a toolkit to assist with the implementation and expansion of Telehealth technology in stroke practices ranging from acute care, rehabilitation, into the community, and beyond.

Mary-Lou Halabi, Stroke Services Coordinator, provided “A Behind the Scenes Look at the Door to Needle Time Process Improvement Initiative at the University of Alberta Hospital”. Through interdepartmental collaboration and implementation of process improvement principles, **this initiative has resulted in a 41% decrease in thrombolytic treatment time;** leading to better outcomes for stroke patients.

The final day of Congress opened with a plenary celebrating “Top Breakthroughs & Co-Chairs Awards for Innovation/Impact”, a presentation of the six top abstracts submitted to Congress. Agnes Joyce, Manager of the Cardiovascular Health and Stroke Strategic Clinical Network (CVHS SCN) and former Coordinator with the Stroke Program Edmonton Zone, was among the presenters. Agnes spoke on “Best Practice and Early Supported Discharge in Rural Stroke Care – The Dream and the Reality.” She described the [Stroke Action Plan](#) (SAP), a province-wide plan to ensure that stroke patients in small urban and rural settings receive the same level of care delivered in the larger centres. Congratulations to CVHS SCN and the entire SAP team for receiving high honors and national recognition with the 2014 Canadian Stroke Congress Co-Chairs’ Award for Impact for their ground-breaking work on this initiative!



Agnes Joyce, Clinical Network Manager, accepts award on behalf of the Cardiovascular Health and Stroke Strategic Clinical Network

Dr. Laura Gioia, UAH Stroke Fellow, represented Edmonton Zone in the oral presentations following the plenary, speaking to her research on the correlation of perihematomal ischemia and intracerebral hemorrhage volume.

The final day concluded with a sit-down luncheon and another “Brag and Steal” session, where 10 delegates were given a five-minute opportunity to showcase their brag-worthy initiatives. Kirsten George-Phillips, Pharmacist UAH Stroke Prevention Clinic, presented “Pharmacist Management of Modifiable Risk Factors: Implementing PREVENTION Into SPC Practice”, and Colleen Taralson, Stroke Services Coordinator, had the opportunity to present the in-patient stroke algorithm at the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH), which utilizes the expertise of the Rapid Response Team and Telestroke technology to ensure timely management of in-patient stroke.

AHS Edmonton Zone was also well-represented with poster submissions, including:

- Gail Elton-Smith’s poster on [Implementing Alpha-FIM in Edmonton Zone](#)
- Mary-Lou Halabi’s poster on [Developing a Post Stroke Depression Screening Protocol](#)
- Colleen Taralson and Sylvia Gaucher collaborated with North Zone on a poster outlining the [Telestroke Connection between High Level and Edmonton](#)
- Dr. Ghazala Basir, former UAH Stroke Fellow, presented two posters on the PEACE study, [Decision Challenges with Anticoagulation for Brief Episodes of Atrial Fibrillation \(AF\)](#) and [Optimal Duration of Cardiac Monitoring to Detect AF](#), which she collaborated on with a number of other researchers while here in Edmonton

If you would like more information on the posters or presentations, contact StrokeProgramEdmontonZone@albertahealthservices.ca

We are extremely proud of the work being done to improve stroke care in the Edmonton Zone and encourage all healthcare professionals working within stroke to submit their work to Congress 2015, scheduled for October 3rd - 6th in Toronto. Congress offers a wonderful opportunity to network and learn. We hope to see you there!

We apologize if we have missed anyone from Edmonton Zone in this issue - please let us know so we can provide acknowledgements in the next edition of SPEZ Buzz.

Stroke Competency Framework for Health Care Providers

The [Stroke Competency Framework](#) has recently been released as a tool to meet the educational needs of healthcare providers working in stroke care. This inter-professional tool outlines the knowledge and skills you need to provide effective care for stroke patients and their families. It also provides orientation guides for educators in three areas of service.

Continuing Education

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| January 9-10 th | AOTA Specialty Conference: Adults with Stroke |
| January 17-18 th | Functional Electrical Stimulation: Applications in Rehabilitation |
| January 30 th | Every Nurse Celebrating Practice Symposium - 2015 |
| March 14-15 th | Cognitive Orientation to Daily Occupational Performance (CO-OP) Approach Workshop |
| June 2-5 th | Canadian Association of Rehabilitation Nurses 2015 Conference |

On-Going Education

Acute Stroke Case Rounds (Calgary Stroke Program)
First Friday of every month * register on the Telehealth Scheduler

Edmonton Rehabilitation Rounds

2nd Wednesday of every month from 1200 – 1300
* Register on the Telehealth Scheduler

January 14th, 2015
“Rehab Intensity” presented by Dr. Sean Dukelow, Calgary Stroke Program

February 11th, 2015
“Compassion and Empathy in Difficult Situations” presented by Jaeun Macen, Chaplain, Foothills Hospital