

Feedback report: March 2018

The Stroke Association Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation Priority Programme Award in Haemorrhagic Stroke

Introduction

Thanks to the Foundation's generosity, Professor David Werring (Professor of Clinical Neurology at University College London, Honorary Consultant Neurologist at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery), and Professor Peter Rothwell (Action Research Professor of Neurology and Director of the Centre for Prevention of Stroke and Dementia at the University of Oxford) were awarded the Stroke Association The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation Priority Programme Award. They are amongst a small handful of the country's leading researchers and clinicians in haemorrhagic stroke.

Haemorrhagic stroke (bleeding into the brain) is often fatal, but treatment hasn't greatly developed in the last 30 years. Our understanding and treatment of haemorrhagic stroke lags far behind what is known and can be done for the more common, ischaemic (blood blockage) type of stroke.



In April 2016, Professor Werring had the pleasure of publicly receiving his Priority Programme Award directly from Lady Wolfson and Professor Sir Mark Walport at the Stroke Association's Keynote Lecture.

The Stroke Association Priority Programme Awards

In 2014, Professor Werring came together with haemorrhagic stroke survivors and other leading experts in haemorrhagic stroke to help set the priorities for haemorrhagic stroke research in the UK



The Stroke Association chose haemorrhagic stroke as one of three underfunded areas of stroke research, to benefit from its ambitious Priority Programme Awards scheme launched in 2015. This awards scheme aims to fast-track improvements in stroke treatment and care, and is awarded to the leading researchers in their field. We are incredibly grateful to the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation, for making the very first gift to establish this pioneering programme.

Since the launch of the Priority Programme Awards, funding has also been given in two other underfunded areas: The Psychological and Emotional Impact of Stroke; and Stroke and Vascular Dementia. And at this year's Stroke Association Keynote Lecture on 2 May 2018, a further two Priority Programme Awards will be presented in the area of Haemorrhagic stroke. This time to Professor Rustam Al- Shahi Salman, and Professor Colin Smith, both from the University of Edinburgh.

Protecting the brain after a haemorrhage by improving blood pressure control using home monitoring (PROHIBIT-ICH)

Why is this research needed?

In the UK, about 150,000 people have a stroke per year; up to about 23,000 are due to bleeding in the brain – intracerebral haemorrhage (ICH). ICH is fatal in nearly 50% of cases, and survivors often have physical or cognitive (memory) problems and a risk of further ICH and worsening cognition.

Our study is about people who have survived a stroke due to bleeding in the brain - intracerebral haemorrhage (ICH), also often simply called “brain haemorrhage”. Most cases of brain haemorrhage are related to disease of small blood vessels in the brain (termed small vessel disease, or SVD), which are damaged by high blood pressure (BP). Lowering blood pressure is the most promising way to prevent ICH and SVD, but many stroke survivors (65% in one recent study) still do not achieve good BP control. We do not know how BP lowering protects the brain, how much to lower it, for how long, and how best to properly control it over the long-term. Our trial will be the first to tackle these important research questions.

What will the study do?

The study will investigate BP monitoring using home telemetry (sending BP information to a study centre) to allow treatment adjustments, improving BP control. This should allow survivors of ICH to understand and manage their BP. This should improve outcomes for ICH survivors. We will also measure the effect of BP lowering on advanced brain scans using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), which is able to detect changes in the brain due to damage to the small vessels.

Anticipated achievements

When the study is completed we will have new information on two important aspects of BP control after ICH. First, we will establish, for the first time, the feasibility, safety and effectiveness of telemetric home monitoring. And second, we will have new information on how very careful and sustained BP control might protect the brain from small vessel disease and recurrent brain haemorrhage.

What are the expected benefits from the research?

The study will show whether more intensive lowering of BP in survivors of ICH is feasible, safe and effective in reducing brain injury. If successful, the team will be able to design a larger definitive trial. The intervention should allow survivors of ICH to know, understand, and manage their own BP to prevent strokes and cognitive impairment, and improve outcomes.

Professor Werring presented at the 2017 UK Stroke Forum in Liverpool. The conference is the biggest multidisciplinary conference on stroke in the UK and was attended by over 1450 attendees from across the stroke care pathway.



Thank you for generous support of stroke research.