



# Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 1, April 2009

## Welcome to the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum Newsletter

The 8<sup>th</sup> Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum (SSNF) Conference *Stroke in Younger People* was held at the Education Centre in Stirling Royal Infirmary. The day was opened by the SSNF Chair Hazel Fraser who set the scene, followed by the opening presentation, an overview of stroke in younger people, presented by Dr Keith Muir, Consultant Neurologist and Senior Lecturer, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde. The day followed with presentations on a number of topics related to younger stroke survivors including: Patient Centered Care, Stroke "A Family Affair" and Driving after Stroke. Throughout the day and within the last presentation, the forum had attempted a novel way of presenting the views of those who had experienced stroke and their carers, through DVD clips. Filming involved a small facilitated group of volunteers from Fife and we thank them for sharing their experiences with us. Following the initial IT difficulties, this proved to be an excellent way of hearing about issues, the people talked openly about their experiences following their stroke and how they have coped with the changes. 117 completed evaluation forms were returned, 88% nursing staff 9% AHP's; evaluation feedback very positive overall. In particular 73% made positive comments about the video clips, the conference planning committee took note of all other comments and suggestions for future conferences.



### Donation to Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland from SSNF

At the recent SSNF committee meeting in January held at the Dewars Centre in Perth, Hazel Frazer, SSNF Chair, presented a cheque representing the profit (£1625) from last year's SSNF Conference to Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS). Accepting the cheque, the Charity's Director of Advice & Support, Margaret Somerville, said:



*"I am delighted to accept this cheque on behalf of CHSS and would like to thank the SSNF for giving us such a generous donation. The money will go towards funding our much needed work to support people affected by stroke illness, particularly our acclaimed stroke nurse service. Our stroke nurses help people who have had a stroke adjust to the changes and adjustments needed to return home and provide them and their families with ongoing advice and support."*

Margaret Somerville, CHSS Director of Advice & Support, (left) accepts the cheque from SSNF Chair Hazel Fraser, watched by committee members.

## CHSS Campaign October 2008 Challenge Hamish



Less than half of Scots take the recommended half an hour's exercise a day. Studies have shown that if adults do 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least five times a week they greatly reduce their risk of dying from coronary heart disease, the nation's leading cause of death. Regular exercise also decreases the risk of stroke, colon cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure. Leading Scottish Charity CHSS is determined to make a difference to these worrying statistics.

CHSS launched a challenging campaign to encourage everyone to get active. Inspired by the Charity's initials and its mascot, Hamish McBear, the campaign slogan was "Challenge Hamish Step by Step" and the message was that if you take steps to make your heart beat faster you'll live to be glad you did!

Dumfries and Galloway health professionals, local stroke, heart and respiratory group members together with CHSS staff and supporters rallied round to take up the challenge and events across the region was organised to demonstrate some of the imaginative and enjoyable forms that exercise can take.



Seen from left to right: Christine Cartner, Stroke Liaison Sister, Dr IFC Hay, Stroke Consultant, Sandra Galligan, VSS Coordinator, Dumfries & Galloway, Dr G Tait, Cardiologist, Karen McMeekan, Cardiac Rehabilitation Sister, Dr S Little, Respiratory Consultant and Helen Coles, Respiratory Nurse Specialist

Within the Cardiac Rehabilitation facility the stroke, cardiac and respiratory patients and staff completed the Southern Upland Way using the exercise equipment to walk or cycle. A number of patients and staff were sponsored for the number of miles completed. Also some short health walks were mapped out including one starting from the Charity's shop at 80 Friars Vennel in Dumfries and members of the public were invited to join staff and supporters of the Charity as they tested the route. There was also a number of short local walks during the week of the campaign which members of Dumfries, Dalbeattie and Annan stroke groups took part supported by the local Walking Walks Project. It was a very successful week with over £3000 raised for CHSS.

## SSNF Member Wins Scotland's Top Award

Congratulations to SSNF member and Senior Charge Nurse Bernie McLoughlin who was named RCN Scotland 2008 Nurse of the Year at the Scottish Health Awards in Edinburgh. Bernie works in the stroke rehabilitation unit at Perth Royal Infirmary, was given the award in recognition of the difference she has made to the recovery of stroke patients across the region. Bernie was nominated for the award by former patient Prof. Peter Cope of Stirling University. He said 'Bernie is a nurse who shows that nursing can make an enormous difference to patients. I owe her everything'.

## Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) Guideline 108 Launched

In December 2008 the revised SIGN guideline on “Management of Patients with Stroke or TIA: Assessment, investigation, immediate management and secondary prevention” was launched. The document outlines the acute management of strokes with an emphasis on patients accessing acute care and the delivery of thrombolysis. If you would like to access the document then go to [www.sign.ac.uk](http://www.sign.ac.uk).

### Stroke-specific Education Framework

The Department for Health for England have supported the development of a stroke-specific education framework to provide a nationally recognised, quality assured and transferable education and learning programmes in stroke at pre-registration and post graduate level. The document is now out for consultation until 12 June 2009. The final version of the framework is to have its own web site and to remain a living document, updated as necessary to reflect changes and improvements in evidence related to stroke. Visit:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_098352](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_098352)

### Stroke Research Questions: A Nursing Perspective

In 2005, the SSNF commissioned a research project to investigate what the key issues are for stroke nurses in relation to future research. A sample of 40 SSNF members working in a variety of stroke care settings throughout Scotland took part in focus groups and identified the following stroke nurse research priorities:

- Integrated care pathways
- Nursing roles and structures/culture
- Rehabilitation goal setting
- Nutrition and meal-time care
- Bladder incontinence
- Sexual health
- Complications of stroke
- Complementary therapies
- Information provision
- Secondary prevention

It is the aim of the SSNF to support research in these key areas to ensure the development of research evidence-base in stroke nursing. This will lead to increased knowledge, better quality of care and ultimately better outcomes for stroke patients. If you require further information or support with stroke research nursing projects please contact: Anne Rowat: email: [a.rowat@napier.ac.uk](mailto:a.rowat@napier.ac.uk)

The full results of this study have been published:

*Rowat A; Lawrence M; Horsburgh D; Legg L; Smith L; on behalf of the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum (2009) Stroke research questions: a nursing perspective British Journal of Nursing 18 (2) 100-105*

This project was funded by CHSS and Boehringer Ingelheim.

## Grampian News

### Herald Awards 2008

CHSS Stroke Nurse Fiona Sales reached the finals of the 2008 Herald Society awards. Her nomination was "for ground-breaking work to support outpatients with transient ischaemic attack (TIA) and minor stroke" in the 'Health Provider of the Year' category. Although she did not win Fiona was one of 4 finalists out of hundreds of nominations, and was the only finalist in any category from outwith the central belt area of Scotland.



Fiona Sales (centre) and colleagues at the awards

The work centres on the holistic support. Fiona has made a substantial difference to how hundreds of patients after TIA and minor stroke cope with the diagnosis, their health, and many other aspects of their lives.

*"We have not heard of any other service in Scotland which offers so much" says Mairi Chrystal, CHSS Grampian Lead Stroke Nurse. "Fiona not only sees patients in a nurse-led clinic but also provides advice and information, has instigated an extra service in Fraserburgh to save patients long journeys from the north of the Grampian region, and visits outpatients in their home. She also provides support to the patient's family."*

Fiona, who is employed by CHSS and funded in partnership with NHS Grampian Stroke Managed Clinical Network and Aberdeen University Baird Fund, says information is vital for patients and their families: *"Many people just don't know what to expect, how to cope, and who can offer help. My post is unusual as I guide people through the medical, well-being and welfare aspects of their condition, adapting advice to their particular needs. Time and again patients say how important and reassuring it is to get help quickly and answers to their questions."*

TIA and stroke symptoms, such as weakness of a limb or loss of speech, may be brief and appear minor but an episode can lead to great anxiety about future strokes, and have an impact on employment, driving and finances.



Fiona Sales (left) at work in the clinic

The response to Fiona's work has been overwhelmingly positive from patients, relatives and clinicians. She says:

*"It is also very rewarding for me to know that providing this support is contributing to the prevention of more serious strokes, and helping so many people and those around them see their future with confidence."*

Fiona's involvement with patients in the NHS Grampian region is now part of routine management, addressing health improvement, meeting the challenges of serving of a large geographical area, and reducing health inequalities.

## Grampian News

### New Stroke Unit Opens

NHS Grampian has opened a new 6-bedded Stroke Rehabilitation Unit at Fraserburgh Hospital in North Aberdeenshire. The unit offers a full specialist rehabilitation facility, and means patients from the north of Aberdeenshire have the opportunity to access their rehabilitation much nearer to home.

### Telemedicine Award

People admitted to Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin, with stroke symptoms now have instant access to stroke experts at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (ARI) through a teleconsultation. This innovative approach will mean patients can be assessed for the clot-busting treatment thrombolysis, which can greatly improve a patient's recovery from stroke.

*"This is the first 24/7 telemedicine network for stroke thrombolysis decision-making in Scotland, and, I believe, in the UK" says Anne Duthie, Service Development Manager at the Scottish Centre for Telehealth, who managed this development, as part of a national project using telemedicine to provide equal access to stroke specialists. The new service has been welcomed by Issie Graham, Lead System Manager for Dr Gray's: "Some 150-200 patients in Moray experience strokes each year, the consequences of which can be devastating. This procedure, which can enhance recovery, is a significant addition to our services here; Helen Mellis, Clinical Nurse Manager of our A&E, has been leading the developments, and the implementation of the service." The clinical lead for the service is Dr Mary Joan Macleod, Acute Stroke Specialist in ARI: "Knowing the symptoms of stroke and acting immediately is vital - you call 999. Although not all patients are suitable for this treatment, the earlier people are seen after the symptoms come on, the more likely they are to benefit."*

In Dr Gray's A&E department, there is now a high-resolution plasma screen in a dedicated room linked to the stroke unit at ARI. Staff will set up the teleconsultation and be with the patient during the consultation. The patient will be able to have vital tests at Dr Gray's, such as a CT brain scan to establish the type of stroke, and local staff will administer treatments, including administering the clot-busting drug, if it is suitable for that type of stroke. The new service was recently the winner of a 2008 Scottish Health Award.

### Stroke Voices Scotland

The aim of the Stroke Voices Project is to develop a robust and sustainable patient/carer involvement training package, applicable to all with experience of stroke, to empower their voices in the development of stroke services across all 14 health board areas throughout Scotland. The programme will be modeled on the already established Hearty Voices package. Hearty Voices Scotland provides training sessions for patients and carers in order to empower them to become meaningfully involved in the delivery of healthcare and service planning. Stroke Voices will be carefully adapted to meet the needs of stroke user representatives and their carers regardless of their ability. The project runs till June 2010. For the latest April 2009 newsletter or further information, please contact Juliet MacKellaig, Project Manager [juliet.mackellaig@chss.org.uk](mailto:juliet.mackellaig@chss.org.uk)

## UK Stroke Forum

I have been invited to be the Scottish representative on the UK Stroke Forum Steering Group and Conference Planning Committee; other colleagues from Scotland represent other coalition organisations on the forum.

The 4th UK Stroke Forum Conference 2009 is on 1-3 December 2009 at SECC, Glasgow. This year the conference offers a choice of exciting social events including the Civic Welcome Reception on the Tuesday evening, kindly supported by Glasgow City Council. The Gala Dinner and Ceilidh will take place on Wednesday 2 December. The 2009 Book of Abstracts will be published in *The International Journal of Stroke* and available online. The conference programme will include guided tours of the posters and poster prizes for selected authors.

**Call for Abstracts** - the call for abstracts is now open and will close on 27 June  
**Delegate Registration** - opens at the end of April; check the website at [www.ukstrokeforum.org](http://www.ukstrokeforum.org)

For further information contact Campbell Chalmers, Stroke Nurse Consultant  
Tel: 01236 707724 or email [campbell.chalmers@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:campbell.chalmers@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)

## Dates for the Diary

*11th June 2009*

Scottish Stroke Research Network 3rd Annual Conference 'BASICS'  
The Teacher Building, St Enoch Square, Glasgow. For registering and displaying of study information please log on to <http://scotland.uksrn.ac.uk/>

*15<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at 2pm*

Scottish Stroke Care Audit Scotland - national meeting  
Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. To register contact Anne Fairbairn on 0131 247 3649 or by e-mail [a.fairbairn@rcpe.ac.uk](mailto:a.fairbairn@rcpe.ac.uk)

*24<sup>th</sup> September 2009*

SSNF Conference 2009 "Better Stroke Care in Scotland" in partnership with STARS launching Advancing Competencies, Stirling Management Centre

*1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009*

4<sup>th</sup> UK Stroke Forum Conference at Glasgow SECC; visit [www.ukstrokeforum.org](http://www.ukstrokeforum.org)

**We welcome contributions to the Newsletter!**

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