

17th September 2013

Submission to: National Assembly for Wales: Health and Social Care Committee
Call for Evidence: Stroke Risk Reduction – Follow-up Inquiry

Response from: The Royal Pharmaceutical Society

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the National Assembly for Wales' Health and Social Care Committee follow-up inquiry into stroke risk reduction.

Having surveyed our members and key stakeholders responsible for the delivery of pharmaceutical care in Wales, we have not been made aware of any significant changes in the treatment and management of stroke risk reduction in the areas recommended by the Committee.

The recommendations we made to the Committee in our original submission to the stroke inquiry are still important and we are not aware of any significant steps being made in Wales to:

- Develop a national enhanced service for the treatment and provision of advice to individuals with vascular disease
- Target and support those at highest risk through targeted medicines review
- Create robust mechanisms to ensure the consistent implementation of clinical guidelines
- Develop a greater role for pharmacists in national vascular screening services

Where developments have taken place, it appears these have been on an ad hoc basis rather than as part of a national strategic approach to stroke risk reduction. The '*Lower your risk of stroke community pharmacy campaign*' is a clear example of this. We welcomed this campaign however and believe that campaigns such as this play a key role in raising public awareness of the increased stroke risk amongst people diagnosed with hypertension and atrial fibrillation

(AF). In particular we support the opportunities that this community pharmacy based campaign offered to patients in:

- Providing advice on lifestyle changes which reduce stroke risk
- Offering people taking antihypertensive medicines or oral anticoagulants to decrease their stroke risk to have a medicines use review (MUR)
- Reminding people of the most common signs of a stroke and the importance of seeking emergency medical attention.

We believe that the role of pharmacy in helping to reduce the risk of stroke among at-risk patients should not however depend only on an annual national campaign. We believe the opportunities provided through the pharmacy network should be a mainstay of opportunistic advice and support in hospital settings and the community for people at risk of having a stroke. We believe that pharmacists, as well as nurses, should be actively encouraged to check for AF when appropriate and refer onwards for further investigations by other health professionals as and when required. The opportunities for identifying the symptoms of AF and preventing stroke can thereby be vastly increased.

Overall we continue to advocate that the pharmacy profession has a significant role to play in providing opportunistic advice and support to people at risk of having a stroke. We believe the skills of the pharmacy team should play an increasingly formal and recognised role in helping to prevent strokes across Wales.

We trust that this contribution is helpful. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us. Additionally we would be prepared to give oral evidence as part of this follow-up inquiry, if invited by the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Mair Davies

Chair Welsh Pharmacy Board

About Us

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) is the professional body for every pharmacist in Great Britain. We are the only body that represents all sectors and specialisms of pharmacy in Great Britain.

The RPS leads and supports the development of the pharmacy profession to deliver excellence of care and service to patients and the public. This includes the advancement of science, practice, education and knowledge in pharmacy and the provision of professional standards and guidance to promote and deliver excellence. In addition, it promotes the profession's policies and views to a range of external stakeholders in a number of different forums.

Its functions and services include:

Leadership, representation and advocacy: Ensuring the expertise of the pharmacist is heard by governments, the media and the public.

Professional development, education and support: helping pharmacists deliver excellent care and also to advance their careers through professional advancement, career advice and guidance on good practice.

Professional networking and publications: hosting and facilitating a series of communication channels to enable pharmacists to discuss areas of common interest, develop and learn.

For further information please see:

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