

ESO Stroke Unit and Stroke Centre Certification

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BACKGROUND In 2016, the ESO Stroke Unit Committee (SUC) presented, the ESO Stroke Unit (SU) and Stroke Centre (SC) Certification Process, based on the ESO recommendations.¹ We present the current state of national and ESO certifications for Stroke Units and Stroke Centres by April 2018.

Methods On December 14th 2017, we sent survey I about the existence of regional or national certification programs to the leaders of ESO-registered Stroke Organisations in Europe. In case of missing responses, reminders were sent at least twice. All responses were reviewed during a committee meeting on March, 16th 2018.

Results Five national Stroke organisations had their own certification programs. Three nations with continuously ongoing certification- and re-certification for at least 5 years, site-visits and existence of a national comprehensive certification program were invited to survey II. They answered to what degree national certification work was equivalent to the ESO certification criteria. The national certifications of Germany, Switzerland and the Czech Republic were found most equivalent to the ESO certification program, and their hospitals are endorsed by the ESO. Figure 1 shows the certified ESO SU and ESO SC and the state of endorsed national certification work by April 2018. Lithuania closely matched the criteria, but was missing site-visits and re-certifications.



ESO certified SU and SC by April 2018

SU

Metropolitan Hospitals – Stroke Unit – Pireus – Greece
 AZ Sint-Jan Brugge-Oostende AV – Stroke Unit – Brugge – Belgium
 Europe Hospitals – Stroke Unit – Brussels – Belgium
 Mater University Hospital – Stroke Unit – Dublin – Ireland

SC

Centro Hospitalar Villa Nova de Gaia / Espinho – Stroke Centre – Villa Nova de Gaia – Portugal
 Universitätsspital Basel – Stroke Centre – Basel – Switzerland
 Erasmus MC University Medical Center Rotterdam – Rotterdam – The Netherlands

Discussion ESO certification focusses on knowledge, skills, and quality to improve stroke patient care. The ESO wants to provide a benchmark for quality of stroke management to raise the quality of stroke care in Europe and to build a research network. National certification programs have been in place in some nations in Europe for years. France, Italy and Hungary require criteria to be fulfilled before a hospital achieves the label of a stroke unit or a stroke centre. Our survey has limitations, not permitting direct comments in case of non-established certification work. National health care systems are heterogeneous, and we are aware that other quality work to improve stroke care exists, such as national audits: for example in the UK, Denmark and in Austria. Other surveys regarding different quality stroke care in Europe will follow with our future goal, to build a research platform.

Reference

1. Ringelstein EB, Chamorro A, Kaste M, Langhorne P, Leys D, Lyrer P, et al. European Stroke Organisation recommendations to establish a stroke unit and stroke center. *Stroke* 2013;44(3):328-40.

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