

Press Release: BSC Applauds Initial Step in Stroke Care Structuring but Calls for Uniform Criteria Across Regions

Brussels, Belgium – 23 May 2024 – The Belgian Stroke Council (BSC) is pleased to announce that the first step towards a comprehensive national organization of stroke care in Belgium has been achieved. The identification of S2 centers, capable of providing both thrombolysis and thrombectomy treatments, marks a significant milestone in the effort to improve stroke care across the country.

The primary goal of the BSC is to improve stroke care in Belgium, and the structuring of stroke care has been a long-anticipated development. Recognition of S2 centres is a crucial first step, ensuring that specialized centres are equipped and skilled to handle stroke cases effectively and comprehensively.

However, the BSC expresses concerns regarding the inconsistency in the application of criteria across the different regions of Belgium. The actual recognition of S2 centres was based on varying interpretations of the criteria, which led to numerous discrepancies in the selection criteria adopted by the different regional governments, such as the distances between centres and the accounting method used for thrombectomy procedures.

The BSC strongly opposes political interference in stroke care decisions and urges that the original federal guidelines be adhered to uniformly across all regions, without additional interpretation or supplementary regulations. Consistent application of these guidelines is essential to ensure equitable and high-quality stroke care for all patients, regardless of their location in Belgium, and is vital to the credibility of our healthcare system.

Furthermore, the BSC emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to structuring stroke care in Belgium. Beyond the identification of S2 centres, it is crucial to address other areas such as the identification of S1 centres, the establishment of a stroke database, the evaluation of quality indicators and the improvement of Belgium's performance in the context of European action such as SAP-E.

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About the Belgian Stroke Council (BSC): The Belgian Stroke Council is dedicated to improving stroke care and outcomes in Belgium through advocacy, education, and the promotion of best practices in stroke management.