

## **"BRAIN AGEING AND DEMENTIA IN LMICs 2016"**

Report on the IBRO and other organisations co-sponsored symposium on dementia with emphasis on risk factors, biomarkers, gender, genetics, pathophysiology and prevention

in collaboration with and support of the Institute of Neuroscience and Institute for Ageing, Newcastle University, UK; Centre for Ageing and Health (AgeCAP), Sweden; Alzheimer's Research, UK and the African Academy of Neurology (AFAN)

**6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2016**

**Safari Park Hotel Conference Centre  
Nairobi, Kenya**

The landmark symposium on Brain Ageing and Dementia in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) 2016, in part sponsored by the International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO; <http://ibro.info/>) and the European Academy of Neurology (EAN; [www.ean.org](http://www.ean.org)) as well as Alzheimer's Research UK was again a remarkable success. Nearly 100 delegates from more than 20 countries attended the quadrennial conference in Nairobi in the same delightful venue of the Safari Park Hotel. This fourth meeting highlighted recent advances in the global burden of disease, epidemiology and biomarkers for dementia, cognitive impairment after stroke, prevention and current treatments for dementia. It was an excellent forum for timely reviews on several epidemiological studies and risk factors across the LMICs in comparison to Western Europe, North America and Japan. The three day programme began with a warm *karibuni* from Prof Julius Ogeng'o (Kenya) representing the VC of the University of Nairobi, Prof David Ndeti (African Mental Health Foundation) and from Dr Augustina Charway-Felli (Ghana) on behalf of the African Academy of Neurology (AFAN; <http://afaneurology.org/index.html>). The busy schedule engaged speakers from Argentina, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ghana, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, USA and Venezuela, who have first-hand clinical experience in dementia or relevant research, specifically in stroke and Alzheimer's disease in their own countries.

This time Professor Raj Kalaria (UK-Kenya) convened the symposium with assistance of Prof Raul Arizaga (Argentina) and Adesola Ogunniyi (Nigeria). International dementia experts including Rufus Akinyemi (Nigeria), Laila Asmal (South Africa), Robert Friedland (USA), Masafumi Ihara (Japan), Gladys Maestre (Venezuela-USA), Abdul Mohammed (Sweden-Kenya), David Ndeti (Kenya), Felix Potocnik (South Africa), Ingmar Skoog (Sweden) and Richard Walker (UK) chaired the 10 thematic sessions. In total, the scientific programme comprised some 55 presentations on various aspects of dementia and its influence on the developing world. The convenors were also gratified that several

young investigators who included IBRO alumni from Africa and other countries could be sponsored to attend this important symposium.

Delegates repeatedly expressed that this symposium was invaluable and timely in that it filled an important niche for dementia researchers working with or in the LMICs. This is poignant because of the ever increasing ageing population globally that is expected to add to the burden of non-communicable diseases including ischaemic heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, psychiatric disorders and stroke in the elderly of LMICs. Neurodegenerative dementias, stroke-related dementia and late-onset depression are bound to rise in the developing world, which is rapidly undergoing demographic transition. It was specifically recognised that largely preventable stroke-related dementias are high in some communities of the LMICs. The costs and socioeconomic factors associated with dementia were noted to be magnified in many LMICs despite the changing landscape of dementia prevalence in high income countries such as the UK and USA. Some of the new dementia topics included dental microbes, sleep, language, phyto-chemicals, travel, sociocultural dimensions in screening dementia and HIV related cognitive impairment. Some speakers also discussed the value of physical activity/exercise and cognitive function.

The convenors take this opportunity to offer their sincere appreciation for the generous sponsorship offered by IBRO and other organisations without which the symposium would not have been possible. This was opportune in the current climate of austerity and diminishing industry support. The symposium constituted the educational and training activities of IBRO Africa supported by the African Regional Committee. The sponsorship of the EAN, AgeCAP (Sweden) and the Institutes of Newcastle University is gratefully acknowledged. The participation of the Aphasia and Neurocognitive Disorders Research Group of the WFN was particularly welcome. We are also indebted to numerous colleagues in particular Arthur Oakley (UK), Ridhi Kalaria (UK), Jamie Kendall (UK), Yoshiki Hase (UK), and William Stevenson (UK) who spent hours of effort in making sure this pace-setting symposium was a success. The conference concluded with an *Asante Sana* to all and a parting message from Raul Arizaga in the spirit of *harambee* that working together brings greater success. For more information available at <https://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/advascular/>

*Reported*

*Prof Dr Raj Kalaria (Newcastle University and IBRO) on behalf of the convenors*

Pictures: 1) Symposium Attendees; 2) Swedish delegates with African Cats Troupe after the Nyamha Choma Conference dinner; 3-4) Delegates at various times.