Dr. Ralph Sacco Named Editor of the AHA’s Prestigious Journal Stroke

Fifty years ago, the American Heart Association’s (AHA) journal *Stroke* was conceived as the most comprehensive publication in cerebrovascular disease. Now, it’s the premier journal in the field focused on stroke and cerebrovascular health.

A luminary stroke neurologist and researcher, Ralph L. Sacco, M.D., M.S., professor and chair of neurology and the Olemberg Family Chair of Neurological Disorders at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, has been named incoming editor-in-chief of *Stroke*. The announcement coincided with the International Stroke Conference held February 19-21 at the Los Angeles Convention Center, where Dr. Sacco and other Miller School stroke experts played a prominent role.
Members of the Miller School Department of Neurology at ISC20.

As the editor-elect for Stroke, Dr. Sacco expressed his excitement to take the reins in mid-2020. “I am honored and excited to succeed Dr. Marc Fisher’s incredible tenure as editor-in-chief. We have an outstanding foundation to build upon to move Stroke into the next decade,” said Dr. Sacco. “Our mission will be to drive innovative interdisciplinary research, influence patient care and enhance our understanding of disorders of the cerebral circulation while striving to be an indispensable, inspiring and trusted source of high-quality scientific knowledge for all disciplines. We are expanding the editorial team and have many ideas for broadening the impact of Stroke on our field.”

The latest version of Stroke celebrates the journal’s 50th year with five special manuscripts, including Dr. Sacco’s detailed vision as editor-in-chief, “Stroke Vision 2020: Creating a Roadmap for the Next Decade.” Additional resources on this topic can be found here.

Dr. Sacco was also presented the inaugural American Stroke Association (ASA) Edgar J. Kenton III Lecture Award in recognition of his lifetime contributions to the field of stroke disparities, during the ISC Pre-Conference Symposium III, “HEADS-UP: Health Equity and Actionable Disparities in Stroke: Understanding and Problem-solving.”

As a sought-out expert in the field, Dr. Sacco’s perspective on notable new research presented at the conference can be read in several recent news articles, including:
- CNN: “Another win for optimism! Recovery after stroke”
- MedPage Today: “A Tale of Two Strokes: Hemorrhagic Cases Getting Left Behind”
- MedPage Today: “Out of the Basement: Early Results Promising for Portable MRI”
- Medscape: “Shingles Vaccine Linked to Lower Stroke Risk”

Faculty, fellows and students of the Department of Neurology at the Miller School of Medicine contributed to more than 40 symposia, panels, presentations and posters at this year’s ISC, with topics ranging from national disparities in stroke care to nuances in stroke prevention in the elderly and optimizing endovascular treatment in stroke patients.

In particular, several women from the UM Stroke Division were invited speakers this year, which has special significance given the recent research published on the underrepresentation of women neurologists at ISC.

Hannah Gardener, Sc.D., assistant scientist in the Department of Neurology, presented new research from the Northern Manhattan Study (NOMAS), which showed greater stroke incidence in blacks and Hispanics, including those over age 70. The research was simultaneously published in Stroke. In addition to being featured in the AHA Newsroom, several media outlets wrote about the study, such as: HealthDay, NeuroNews International, Healio/Cardiology Today and more.

"It's important for everyone to know their stroke risk factors, take their prescribed medications and make lifestyle changes that can reduce their risk," Dr. Gardener said. “Risk factor management starting at or before middle age is key in reducing stroke risk, especially among blacks and Hispanics who are at increased risk."
Erika Marulanda-Londono, M.D., M.S., a Miller School stroke neurologist and assistant professor of clinical neurology, was honored at the conference with the late-breaking Bernard J Tyson Career Development Award and presented new research from the Florida Stroke Registry titled “Variation in Acute Ischemic Stroke Metrics for Nationally Certified versus Self-Attested Comprehensive and Thrombectomy Capable Stroke Centers in the Florida Stroke Registry.” The Florida Stroke Registry is a statewide initiative, led by stroke neurologists and researchers at the Miller School, which pools data from hospitals participating in the AHA’s “Get with the Guidelines – Stroke” quality improvement program with a goal to reduce disparities in the local hospitals. To learn more, click here.

“As a physician and researcher with a focus on health disparities, it is an honor to receive an award meant to foster the career of an individual from a typically underrepresented background,” said Dr. Marulanda-Londono. “I am grateful to the AHA for the mentorship it will provide.”

Dr. Ralph Sacco receives the Edgar J. Kenton III Lecture Award.
Addressing the powerful impact of the Florida Stroke Registry on improving stroke care, Dr. Marulanda-Londono said, “Our work showed that nationally certified hospitals outperformed self-attested hospitals in stroke performance metrics and this helped lead to changes in legislation.”

Negar Asdaghi, M.D., assistant professor in the Stroke Division, participated in a lively debate sharing her perspective on perfusion imaging during an ASA and Stroke Society of Australasia joint symposium entitled, “Time Is Brain Is Dead: Only Dead Brain Is Dead.” She also shared her view with Neurology Live (article pending).

Additionally, Dr. Asdaghi gave an invited talk titled “The New Frontiers in Thrombolysis of Patients with Acute Ischemic Stroke (Symposia; 25th anniversary of the NINDS tPA trial) - Thrombolysis in Patients with Minor, Non-disabling Symptoms,” moderated the session “Optimizing EVT,” and presented the poster “Outcomes of Endovascular Thrombectomy in Late-presenting Patients: Findings From the Florida Stroke Registry.”

Nicole Sur, M.D., assistant professor of clinical neurology in the Stroke Division, discussed ways to improve stroke prevention in the elderly in an invited talk titled “Improving Stroke Prevention in the Elderly: A Challenge for the Next Decade.” She also presented three posters:

- Poor Atrial Fibrillation Management Leads to Unnecessary Thrombectomies in Elderly Patients
- The Safety and Outcomes of Endovascular Thrombectomy in Stroke Patients on Oral Anticoagulation: The Florida Stroke Registry
- Factors Associated with Oral Anticoagulant Non-Use for
Patients with Atrial Fibrillation-Related Stroke: The Florida Puerto Rico Atrial Fibrillation Stroke Study

Of note, two Miller School vice chairs attended and significantly contributed to the conference.

As chair of the International Stroke Conference 2020 Program Committee, Miguel Perez-Pinzon, Ph.D., professor of neurology and neuroscience, vice chair for basic science, and director of the Cerebral Vascular Disease Research Laboratories at the Miller School, provided previews and commentary surrounding many of the scientific sessions. Video highlights can be found here.

Jose G. Romano, M.D., professor of clinical neurology, vice chair for clinical affairs and chief of the Stroke Division, presented the results of the MyRIAD study, “Mechanisms of Early Recurrence in Intracranial Atherosclerotic Disease (MyRIAD) Study: Participants, Clinical and Imaging Outcomes,” which was designed to identify mechanisms of ischemia and predictors of recurrence in intracranial atherosclerotic disease (ICAD), a common cause of stroke.

To help support up-and-coming stroke experts, Amer Malik, M.D., M.B.A., assistant professor of clinical neurology in the Stroke Division, provided words of wisdom on life beyond residency at the “Fellow and Early Career Mentoring Luncheon.”

UM fellows and students, several from the Stroke Division, contributed to poster presentations, including:

- The Association Between Aortic Arterial Stiffness,
Carotid Intima-Media Thickness and Carotid Plaques in Community-Dwelling Older Adults. A Population-Based Study (the Atahualpa Project) - Victor J. Del Brutto, et al.

- Radiographic Characteristics of Mild Ischemic Stroke Patients with Visible Intracranial Occlusion; Data from the INTERRSeCT Multi-Center Prospective Imaging Study - Hsien Lee Lau, et al.

The UM stroke neurology team is looking forward to providing additional research updates and perspective at the conference next year in Denver.

The American Stroke Association’s International Stroke Conference is the world’s premier meeting dedicated to the
science of stroke and brain health. This year’s conference featured more than 1,600 scientific presentations in 21 categories that emphasize basic, clinical and translational science for health care professionals and researchers.