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NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

public health challenges



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“With this report go my best wishes that it be disseminated world-wide and it receive the deserved attention of the global health community in all the countries of the world”
— Rita Levi-Montalcini, Nobel Prize in Medicine, 1986

Neurological Disorders: Public health challenges

There is ample evidence that pinpoints neurological disorders as one of the greatest threats to public health. There are several gaps in understanding the many issues related to neurological disorders, but we already know enough about their nature and treatment to be able to shape effective policy responses to some of the most prevalent among them.

Neurological disorders: public health challenges describes and discusses the increasing global public health importance of common neurological disorders such as dementia, epilepsy, headache disorders, multiple sclerosis, neuroinfections, neurological disorders associated with malnutrition, pain associated with neurological disorders, Parkinson's disease, stroke and traumatic brain injuries.

The book provides the public health perspective for these disorders and presents fresh and updated estimates and predictions of the global burden borne by them. It provides information and advice on public health interventions that may be applied to reduce the occurrence and consequences of neurological disorders. It offers health professionals and planners the opportunity to assess the burden caused by these disorders in their country and to take appropriate action.

A clear message emerges that unless immediate action is taken globally, the neurological burden is likely to become an increasingly serious and unmanageable problem in all countries.

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Recommendations for action

- Commitment from decision makers is the first essential step to decrease the burden caused by neurological disorders.
- Societal and professional awareness of public health aspects of neurological disorders needs to be raised through global and local campaigns and initiatives.
- Innovative strategies to address the associated stigma and discrimination need to be part of the public health activities for neurological disorders.
- The most promising approach for reducing the burden of these disorders is to strengthen neurological care within the existing health systems.
- Rehabilitation needs to complement the other key strategies for neurological care such as promotion, prevention and treatment.
- Defining the priorities for research, building national capacity and intensifying international collaboration are some of the important ways for bringing about the changes that people with neurological disorders need.

The above recommendations need to be implemented across a wide range of sectors and disciplines appropriately adapted to local conditions and capacities.

In collaboration with:

Alzheimer's Disease International, European Parkinson's Disease Association, International Association for the Study of Pain, International Bureau for Epilepsy, International Headache Society, International League Against Epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis International Federation, World Federation of Neurology, World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies and World Headache Alliance.



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