<Plenary Lecture>

World Neurology: Challenges, Opportunities and Priorities

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The brain enables quality of life, creativity and human progress. Without a healthy brain, little else matters.

The World Federation of Neurology (WFN) *aims to integrate, prioritize, and help apply advances in brain diseases and the promotion of brain health worldwide*. Much has been achieved in the understanding, diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the brain in the past 50 years. However, the pace of progress needs to be accelerated further, if we are to help stem the growing burden of neurological disorders. Already, neurological disorders are the leading cause of disability adjusted life years (DALY's) in the world, and they are projected to rise.

Our agenda is huge, and our resources are modest, so that we need to *integrate*, *focus*, and *leverage* improvements in neurological disease and promotion of brain health worldwide. Many opportunities exist for synergy. The Greek root "syn" (with) implies working with others, both individuals and organizations. This includes national, regional, and subspecialty organizations, other international organizations dealing with the brain, the World Health Organization (WHO), governments and industry with which we can synergize. Synergy also implies that the combination is more than the sum of its parts, that is, it creates added value. *Value*, *evaluation*, and *viability* need to be our bywords.

An important first step is to survey all relevant activities taking place in a given area. For example, a number of different organizations offer a variety of educational activities. Could something be gained by better coordination and a systematic evaluation of quality and results? It would help to know where we are, before we decide where we are going.

Many more neurologists will be involved and much more will need to be done. The challenges are formidable, but so are the opportunities.

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