

## Speaker biographies for Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025



### **Niki Turner**

National Allied Health Professional Lead for Stroke in Wales  
Stroke Implementation Network, NHS Wales Performance and Improvement

Niki is a physiotherapist with an interest in neurological rehabilitation, specialising in stroke for most of her career and a passionate advocate for high standards of stroke rehabilitation and life after stroke care. She studied for a Master's degree in Neurorehabilitation at Cardiff University, completing an Advanced Clinical Practice placement at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London as part of this.

Niki has particular interests in hyperacute stroke management including thrombolysis, thrombectomy and early rehabilitation after stroke. She has published her work on physiotherapists' experiences of early mobilisation after thrombolysis practice and the development of a HASU-ready nursing workforce on the acute stroke unit. Niki was appointed in October 2021 as the first National AHP Lead for Stroke in Wales. Alongside this role she is now the Service Manager for Stroke at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.



### **Dr Shakeel Ahmad MB ChB FRCP (Lon)**

National Clinical Lead in Stroke Medicine for Wales  
Consultant in Stroke Medicine  
University Hospital of Wales

Shakeel Ahmad was appointed as a stroke consultant in 2009. He has been the clinical lead for stroke in Cardiff & Vale University Health Board until he was appointed as National Clinical Lead in Stroke Medicine for Wales. He has completed 1 year IHI Improvement Advisory fellowship at Boston, USA and has led on a number of successful QI projects. He led and collaborated on the 'Stop A Stroke Project' with Primary Care Quality & Public Health Wales to develop a tool to identify high risk stroke patients in AF that require intervention in line with up to date NICE guidance. This

project was supported by Welsh Government and has been implemented across Wales. He received the professional excellence award from the Stroke Association in 2019. His other current roles are, the Regional Specialty Advisor for Stroke, member of the Stroke Specialist Advisory Committee – RCP London, Training Programme Director for Stroke in Wales and Chair of All Wales Thrombectomy Network Group. In his last post he was Associate Medical Director for Neurosciences & Complex Disease – Welsh Health Specialised Services (WHSSC), that has commissioned mechanical thrombectomy service for Wales. He has led the roll out and implementation of AI for stroke imaging across Wales and led on a pilot to test the Pre-Hospital Video Triage (PVT).



**David Heyburn MBE**

Acting Deputy Director for Innovation and Technology within the Digital, Data, Technology, Innovation and Value Directorate  
NHS Wales Performance and Improvement

I started with the NHS as a Graduate Management Trainee in 1997 and have held senior management and leadership roles in England and Wales since. As well as operational / acute services, key roles I have held in included Specialist Commissioner for Specialised Services at Health Commission Wales, Network Manager for the Welsh Renal Clinical Network and more recently, the Head of Operations for Infection Services at Public Health Wales, during which I was responsible for the operationalisation and delivery of COVID-19 testing across the NHS Wales system. I am currently on secondment into the NHS Wales Executive as acting Deputy Director for Innovation and Technology within the Digital, Data, Technology, Innovation and Value Directorate. Outside of work I am one of the Directors for the Men's Mental Health Charity, Lads & Dads CIC. I am married, have five children, many pets and enjoy cold water dipping!



**Professor Jesse Dawson, MBChB (hons), MD, FRCP, FESO**  
Professor of Stroke Medicine, University of Glasgow and  
Director of Research and Innovation and a Stroke  
Physician in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Jesse Dawson is a Professor of Stroke Medicine at School of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Health in the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences at the University of Glasgow. He is also Director of Research and Innovation and a Stroke Physician in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. He is a member of the European Stroke Organization Executive Committee. Professor Dawson has research interests in clinical trials on prevention and rehabilitation in stroke survivors, with special focus on improving long-term outcomes.



**Professor Avril Drummond**  
Emeritus Professor of Healthcare Research  
University of Nottingham

Avril Drummond is an occupational therapist and Emeritus Professor of Healthcare Research in the University of Nottingham. Avril has a longstanding clinical and academic interest in the rehabilitation of people with stroke and has published articles on clinical services and specific rehabilitation interventions. She is a past Chair of the UK Stroke Forum, a member of the Royal College of Physicians Intercollegiate Working Party for Stroke and the founding Chair for the European conference on Life after Stroke. Avril is a trustee of the Stroke Association and editor-in-chief of Clinical Rehabilitation.



**Dr Matt Richardson**

Clinical psychologist / neuropsychologist

Puāwai Rehabilitation Unit at Wakari Hospital, Dunedin,  
New Zealand

Dr Matt Richardson is a clinical psychologist / neuropsychologist who predominantly works at the Puāwai Rehabilitation Unit at Wakari Hospital, Dunedin, New Zealand (a regional neurorehabilitation service).

He was born and trained in the UK, moving to New Zealand in 2008, when he started working with people with FND for the first time. He soon became dissatisfied with traditional theories of FND, that implicate psychological trauma and stress as the core causative factor, and devised a novel treatment in 2011, now named Nocebo Hypothesis Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (NH-CBT). Since then, he has been gathering evidence regarding the effectiveness of this treatment, and has completed a randomised controlled trial of NH-CBT for functional motor symptoms that saw 85% of people in the intervention condition achieving full symptom remission. He has also completed a pilot consecutive case series in the use of NH-CBT for the treatment of functional seizures, with all participants with daytime seizures who completed the treatment becoming seizure-free at the end of the treatment period.

He has been training rehabilitation professionals how to use his treatment protocol across Australasia since 2018.



**Dr Tom Wright**

Clinical Psychologist

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Dr Tom Wright is a clinical psychologist currently working in Cardiff and Vale UHB stroke clinical psychology service. His clinical role allows him to support patients on their journey through inpatient admission, discharge period, and as outpatients. He has a particular interest in post-stroke grief and strategies for promoting post-traumatic growth during the recovery phase. His passion for working in neuropsychological settings stems from his time in clinical training where he worked with the traumatic brain injury team in Swansea Bay, witnessing the benefits of combining neuropsychological testing with individualised and systemic interventions. He believes in integrating multiple psychological approaches to support the patient and family/carers, including Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT), positive psychology, Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT), and systemic therapy.



**Dr Chris Byrne**

CPC registered Principal Clinical Psychologist in  
Neuropsychology

University of Liverpool

Dr Christopher Byrne is a HCPC registered Principal Clinical Psychologist in Neuropsychology. In his clinical capacity, he works within the field of neurorehabilitation in both community and inpatient settings. He also holds the position of Clinical Lecturer at the University of Liverpool. His clinical and research interests include: Neurorehabilitation; Neuropsychological Assessment; Loneliness and Social Isolation following Brain Injury; Neurobehavioral Interventions; Cognitive rehabilitation; Stroke; Traumatic Brain Injury.



**Emma Dunn**

Advanced Practitioner Level 2 Occupational Therapist  
specialising in stroke rehabilitation at the Acute Stroke Unit  
Royal Victoria Hospital, part of the Belfast Health and Social  
Care Trust

Emma Dunn is an Advanced Practitioner Level 2 Occupational Therapist specialising in stroke rehabilitation at the Acute Stroke Unit, Royal Victoria Hospital, part of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Occupational Therapy from Ulster University.

With 25 years of experience in hospital-based stroke rehabilitation, Emma is dedicated to providing the highest quality, evidence-based care to stroke survivors. She understands the profound impact a stroke can have on individuals and their families, often leading to significant changes and emotional distress. Emma's passion lies in supporting stroke survivors through their recovery journey and offering comprehensive support to their families and caregivers.

In recent years, Emma has developed a keen interest in leveraging technology to enhance rehabilitation outcomes for stroke survivors. Her commitment to integrating innovative solutions into her practice reflects her dedication to improving the lives of those affected by stroke.



**Sarah Stangroom**

Clinical Specialist  
Phagenesis Ltd

Sarah is a highly experienced Speech and Language Therapist who qualified in 1998, with specialist expertise in dysphagia management within critical care. Over the course of her career, she has developed advanced skills in both FEES (Fibreoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing) and videofluoroscopy, becoming a trusted clinician in instrumental assessment and complex case management.

Having spent the majority of her career in the NHS, Sarah recently transitioned into the healthcare industry, bringing her clinical insight and leadership experience into a new context. Her move reflects a continued commitment to improving patient outcomes and supporting SLTs through innovative tools, education, and system-level thinking.

With over 15 years in leadership roles, Sarah is passionate about creating supported, psychologically safe team environments where clinicians are empowered to grow and succeed. She has a strong interest in how we educate and develop SLTs—ensuring they are equipped not only with clinical expertise but with the confidence and resilience to navigate today's healthcare challenges.



**Sarah Giannini**

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)  
Swansea Bay University Health Board

Sarah Giannini is a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) in acute stroke and rehabilitation at Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB).

Sarah trained at the University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth, and has 7 years' worth of experience working across a variety of settings, including inpatient and outpatient services. She has worked across multiple health boards in Wales, and she has also worked internationally in Australia. Her caseloads have included a wide range of acquired and progressive neurological conditions, as well as patients with Voice disorders, Head and Neck Cancer, General Medical conditions, and those requiring Critical Care support.

Sarah has a particular interest in acute stroke rehabilitation and the use of innovative treatments such as pharyngeal electrical stimulation (Phagenyx) to support dysphagia recovery. She is committed to maintaining up-to-date, evidence-based practice to ensure the best possible outcomes for her patients, improving their quality of life.

The SALT team at SBUHB are proud to be the first in Wales to implement Phagenyx, marking an important step forward in evidence-based dysphagia rehabilitation. She is excited to contribute to the Stroke Welsh Conference to share insights and discuss the potential of Phagenyx in enhancing stroke rehabilitation pathways.



**Nia Cunnah**

Speech and Language Therapist  
Swansea Bay University Health Board

Nia is a highly specialist speech and language therapist who works in the multi-disciplinary stroke team in Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUH).

Nia studied in Cardiff Metropolitan university and graduated in 2012. She has worked across a number of setting throughout her career however has a passion for working with acute stroke patients. Over the course of her career, she has developed advanced skills in videoflourouscopy and continues to be committed to learning and developing, working through her FEES competencies (Fibreoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing) and supporting colleagues within the team to develop advanced clinical skills to improve patient outcomes.

Nia is a proud member of the Swansea Bay Speech and Language therapy team and is eager to share learning and reflections in relation to Phagenyx implementation along the stroke pathway in SBUHB.



**Gary Morris**

senior lecturer, Cardiff University and Advanced  
Physiotherapy Practitioner in Neurological  
Rehabilitation, Hywel Dda University Health Board.

Gary is a senior lecturer at the School of Healthcare Sciences, Cardiff University and an Advanced Physiotherapy Practitioner in Neurological Rehabilitation for the Hywel Dda University Health Board.

In his NHS role he works with people with a range of long-term neurological conditions including stroke, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury. Gary was the first physiotherapist independent prescriber in Wales and utilised this skill in developing an award-winning physiotherapy-led spasticity management service.

At the university Gary conducts research and teaching on the topics of neuro-rehabilitation and advanced practice, including the use of ultrasound imaging.

He has worked in collaboration with national and international professional bodies including the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and Brazilian Neurological Physical Therapy Association, to develop physiotherapy professional practice.

He is currently part of the education and practice group for the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Neurology and chair of the All-Wales physiotherapy Botulinum Toxin injectors group.

## Speaker biographies for Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025



### **Angela Evans**

Research Manager for Health and Social Care  
Health and Care Research Wales

Angela Evans has worked in a research role for 17 years: starting as a Research Officer in Ysbyty Gwynedd, then Clinical Studies Officer working across Betsi Cadwaladr UHB, to research management.

Currently working as a Research Manager for Health and Social Care at Health and Care Research Wales. Working within the Research Delivery Hub, Angela manages and streamlines the set-up of research studies across Wales, in a variety of disease specialties, including stroke, and in a number of settings, including secondary care, primary care and care homes. Angela strives to increase engagement and participation in studies across Wales, aiming to improve patient care through research studies and their findings.



### **Dr Manju Krishnan**

Consultant Stroke Physician  
Swansea Bay University Health Board

Dr Manju Krishnan (She/Her) is a Consultant Stroke Physician in Swansea Bay University Health board since 2014. In 2016, she became the Clinical Lead for Swansea stroke services, undertaking improvements in transient ischaemic attack pathways resulting in nomination for the British Medical Journal Clinical Leadership award (2018). She has served as the Clinical Director for Medicine (Feb 2020- Dec 2022) and interim Associate Medical Director for Quality and Safety (Jan 2023- Aug 2024) for Swansea Bay University Health Board.

Dr Krishnan is a keen researcher, having undertaken Principal investigator role in multiple international stroke trials, currently the Chief Investigator for the Swansea

Stroke Scale study, with ongoing PhD affiliation with Swansea University. Areas of interest includes anticoagulation in Stroke, Acute Stroke treatments including blood pressure management, which have been the theme of most of her collaborative research work.

Dr Krishnan was appointed the Wales Deputy Specialty Lead for Stroke in 2016 and working with the Lead, they were able to improve research participation in all Stroke units across Wales. She has stepped up to the Wales Research Lead role from April 2025.

Dr Krishnan is also the secretary for the Welsh Association of Stroke Physicians. Her passion for service improvement helped her complete the postgraduate certificate in Clinical Leadership, and the Improvement Advisor certification with the Scottish Improvement Leader, winning the best Quality Improvement project for the entire cohort (2023-24). She is an Improvement Advisor for her organisation and had led the Swansea Stroke team to win the National Timely Care award at the NHS Wales awards in 2024.

WINNER - Improving timeliness around the use of Naso-Gastric (NG) tube on an Acute Stroke unit (SBUHB) - NHS Wales Executive



**Professor Deb Lowe**

Stroke Association Medical Director

National Clinical Lead for Stroke GIRFT (Getting It Right First Time) Programme Former National Clinical Director for Stroke Medicine at NHS England

Honorary Clinical Chair in Stroke Medicine at the University of Central Lancashire

Prof Deb Lowe is the Stroke Association Medical Director and is also the National Clinical Lead for Stroke GIRFT (Getting It Right First Time) Programme and former National Clinical Director for Stroke Medicine at NHS England. She holds an Honorary Clinical Chair in Stroke Medicine at the University of Central Lancashire.

She has been a Consultant Stroke Physician and Geriatrician at Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust since 2005 and still works clinically. She has had many managerial and leadership roles at trust and region over the last 20 years including Clinical Lead for Stroke for the Northwest Coast within the NHSE Strategic

Clinical Networks and Senate. Since her appointment into a national leadership role in 2017, she has been keen to promote a culture of effective clinical engagement and compassionate leadership, accurate performance monitoring and the use of high quality data to drive sustainable quality improvement and delivery of evidence based, policy directed care.

As part of the GIRFT stroke programme has met with every stroke service in the country in the last 5 years to support quality improvement along the entire stroke pathway, including mechanical thrombectomy. She was instrumental in setting up Integrated Stroke Delivery Network, development of the National Stroke Service Model and Integrated Community Stroke Service Model. Deb co-leads the GIRFT Stroke Leadership Academy at the Royal College of Physicians.



**Dr Jess Williams**

Research Fellow in Cardiovascular Metabolism within CURIAD  
Cardiff Metropolitan University

Dr Jess Williams is a Research Fellow in Cardiovascular Metabolism within CURIAD. Jess' work focuses on the inflammatory progression of cardiovascular disease, looking at methods of disease prevention and novel treatment options. Jess is a Medical Pharmacologist by training and later obtained a British Heart Foundation funded PhD from Cardiff University's School of Medicine' focused on the role of uncontrolled inflammation in the co-morbidity between rheumatoid arthritis and cardiovascular disease. She has since completed postdoctoral research associate roles at both Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Jess' current work focuses on establishing novel methods to stop the progression of cardiovascular disease, with a focus on reducing inflammation. She is now working as a Research Fellow at Cardiff Metropolitan University, where her recent research, funded by the Stroke Association, focuses on using blood biomarkers to predict the risk of stroke in high-risk populations. This research assesses production and phenotypical analysis of populations of extracellular vesicles (EV) in high-risk cardiovascular patients. The project will assess EV reliability and usability as a predictive marker for stroke.

Jess is passionate about the patient voice in scientific research. To that end she is the Patient Public Involvement (PPI) lead for Stroke Hub Wales. Our mission is to ensure that the voices of experts by experience are at the heart of all stroke research carried out in Wales, creating an active partnership that allows true co-production of research.

**Dr Jonathan Hewitt MBBS FRCP (Glas) MSc PhD**

Associate Professor of Stroke and Geriatric Medicine at Cardiff University and an Honorary Consultant Stroke, Geriatric and general Physician for the Aneurin Bevan Health Board

I am an Associate Professor of Stroke and Geriatric Medicine at Cardiff University and an Honorary Consultant Stroke, Geriatric and general Physician for the Aneurin Bevan Health Board. I work half time in the NHS and half in academia. I have authored over 120 academic papers and books and I present regularly at national and international conferences.

I graduated in Medicine from UCL, followed by basic training across the UK and New Zealand, Following my PhD at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in Diabetes in the Older Person, I completed my specialist training in Cambridge and have undertaken a sabbatical at Glasgow University, in the department of Stroke Medicine. I have been a Consultant Physician since 2007. My personal and academic interest has culminated in a tertiary referral service for cardiovascular management of the complex stroke patient.

**Positions of Responsibility**

Chairman of Cardiff School of Medicine Research Ethics Committee, 2014-19

Chairman of British Geriatric Society in Wales, 2016-2020 (Vice Chairman 2014-16)

Member of the Research and Development committee of the British Geriatric Society, 2016-2018

Member of the MRC ethics, regulation and public involvement committee, 2016-present

NIHR Lead for Stroke Research in Wales, 2016-present

NIHR Skills and Development Committee Member 2023-present.

Member of the Ethics and Governance Council of the UK Biobank, 2008-14

Vice Chair of the Ethics and Governance Council of the UK Biobank, 2014-6

Member of the Academic Committee of the British Association of Stroke Physicians 2016-present

Member of the Joint Speciality Committee (Stroke) of the Royal College of Physicians of London 2017-present



**Dr Federico Villagra Povina**

Lecturer in Exercise & Health Physiology  
Aberystwyth University

Dr Federico Villagra

Povina is a Lecturer in Exercise & Health Physiology at Aberystwyth University and a member of the National Cardiovascular Network (NCRN) With a career spanning over two decades, Federico's research focuses on stroke rehabilitation, motor control, and the application of exercise as a therapeutic tool in neurological recovery.

He earned a BSc from Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and an MSc by Research in Human Muscle Physiology from the University of Birmingham. He completed his PhD on the motor control of human tremors before undertaking postdoctoral fellowships in the USA, including work at the University of Kansas Medical Center and Johns Hopkins University, where he contributed to pioneering studies in stroke and Parkinson's Disease rehabilitation.

Federico has held research and academic positions at institutions across the UK, USA, and Spain, including the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, University of Maryland, and University of Navarra. His work integrates neuroimaging, non-invasive brain stimulation, and exercise science to understand and enhance recovery of motor function after stroke.

Federico remains passionate about translating research into clinical practice and advancing rehabilitation strategies that empower stroke survivors to regain independence and quality of life.



**Dr Otar Akanyeti**  
Senior Lecturer  
Aberystwyth University

Otar has BSc in Electronic Engineering (Hacettepe University) and MSc in Embedded Systems and Robotics (University of Essex). His PhD focused on robot learning by demonstration under the supervision of Prof Ulrich Nehmzow at University of Essex. He investigated formal ways of developing controllers for mobile robots using machine learning and system identification methods.

After his PhD, he joined Dr Paolo Fiorini's research group at the University of Verona to work in the FILOSE EU-FP7 project, which interfaced biology and engineering to develop a bio-inspired fish robot with an artificial lateral line. His growing interest in the biological aspects of movement and sensing led him to join Dr James C. Liao's laboratory at Whitney Institute for Marine Biology in University of Florida. There, he investigated the biomechanical, hydrodynamic and neural mechanisms underlying fish locomotion in steady and turbulent flows for efficient movement and energy capture and the organisation of the lateral line system from a distributed sensing perspective.

He joined the Department of Computer Science at Aberystwyth University as Lecturer in 2017 and became a Senior Lecturer in 2022. In Aberystwyth, he expanded his research portfolio to cognitive robotics and neuroscience (map and cue-based navigation) and human health (chronic disease management using technology and artificial intelligence).



**Mr Kevin Tsang**

Consultant neurosurgeon

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

Kevin Tsang trained in the South-West deanery during his neurosurgery residency and became a substantive consultant at Imperial College in October 2014, with subspecialty interests in neurotrauma, CSF disorders and craniofacial surgery. He became the Unit Training Lead in 2016 and took up the Quality Assurance Lead post with the neurosurgery Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC) in 2021, preparing training reports for every unit across the 4 nations of the country.

He also became the Head of Specialty for Major Trauma in the same year and have contributed to many regional and national protocols. Within these roles, he spends much of his time teaching, having been invited speakers at many national and international conferences and events. Beyond the above, he works as a voluntary surgeon for the Facing the World charity which operates in Vietnam and is a trauma surgeon for the FIA, supporting the medical team at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix events.

**Dr Alakendu Sekhar**

Consultant Neurologist and stroke researcher. Founder member Walton Stroke thrombectomy clot bank

Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust

Dr. Alakendu Sekhar is a distinguished Consultant Neurologist based in Liverpool, England, with extensive expertise in general neurology, vascular neurology, stroke medicine, and epilepsy.

Dr. Sekhar earned his MBBS from Silchar Medical College and Hospital, Assam University India. He completed his specialist training in neurology and stroke medicine in southwest England in 2012, obtaining dual accreditation (CCT) in both fields. His professional qualifications include MRCP (UK), MRCP (Neurology), and FRCP (Edinburgh)

Currently, Dr. Sekhar serves as a Consultant Neurologist at The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust in Liverpool. He also holds visiting neurologist positions at Aintree University Hospital and Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trusts.

He was instrumental in establishing the stroke thrombectomy service at The Walton Centre, now serving the entire Cheshire and Merseyside region.

In addition to his NHS roles, Dr. Sekhar practices privately at Spire Liverpool Hospital, Spire Murrayfield Hospital Wirral, and Spire Yale Hospital. He is also affiliated with Re:Cognition Health in London, where he undertakes medicolegal work, focusing on stroke clinical negligence's and brain injury cases.

Dr. Sekhar is actively involved in stroke research and serves as the Deputy Lead for the NIHR-funded Hyperacute Stroke Research Centre (HSRC) in Cheshire and Merseyside. His research interests include acute stroke therapies such as thrombolysis and thrombectomy. He has contributed to several vascular research projects, and the founder of Walton centre stroke thrombectomy clot bank first and only within the UK. Academically, Dr. Sekhar is an Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of Liverpool Medical School, where he is involved in teaching medical students.

He served as Regional Advisor for the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh between 2016 & 2023, promoting education and fellowship initiatives.

Dr. Sekhar is a member of several professional bodies, served in the Stroke Advisory Committee of the Association of British Neurology (ABN).

He received Clinical Excellence Award in his first year as a consultant for developing the stroke intervention pathway for the Cheshire and Merseyside stroke network.



**Declan M. McLaren**  
Research Associate  
University of Strathclyde

Declan M. McLaren is a psychological researcher, with a primary interest in sleep. After completing a PhD at the University of Glasgow exploring insomnia after stroke, Mr McLaren now works as a Research Associate in the Strathclyde Sleep Centre, at the University of Strathclyde. Their research focuses on the impact, assessment, and treatment of insomnia across various neurological and oncological health conditions.

Through his research, Mr McLaren explores the complex aetiologies of insomnia when existing co-morbidly with other conditions, as well as the interactions between sleep and broader health and wellbeing outcomes. They are focused on improving clinical assessment and intervention strategies for insomnia by elucidating the mechanisms underlying insomnia disorder within different clinical contexts.

At this conference, Mr McLaren will present on insomnia after stroke, discussing its aetiology, impact, assessment, and treatment. This talk will highlight current challenges in clinical practice surrounding the assessment and management of sleep disturbances after stroke and explore potential avenues for improving recovery – and life after stroke –through better sleep management.



**Alex Ruck Keene KC (Hon)**

Barrister

39 Essex Chambers and Professor of Practice

King's College London

Alex Ruck Keene KC (Hon) is an experienced barrister, writer and educator. His practice is focused on mental capacity, mental health and healthcare law. He also writes extensively, editing and contributing to leading textbooks, and is the creator of the website [Mental Capacity Law and Policy](#), providing resources and expert commentary on some of the most difficult mental capacity issues. He is also a Professor of Practice at the Dickson Poon School of Law, King's College London and a Visiting Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London. Throughout 2018, he was the legal adviser to the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act 1983. He was a specialist adviser to the Joint Committee on Human Rights for their 2020 inquiry into the human rights implications of the Government's response to COVID-19 and specialist adviser into their 2021-2022 inquiry into human rights in the care setting. In March 2022, Alex was made an honorary KC, reflecting his contributions to mental capacity and mental health law outside the court room.



**Dr Mayank Goyal**

Professor in the Department of Radiology and Clinical  
Neurosciences University of Calgary

Mayank Goyal is a Professor in the Department of Radiology and Clinical Neurosciences at the University of Calgary. He also holds the Heart and Stroke Foundation Chair in Stroke Research. Dr. Goyal's passion and main research interest is acute stroke imaging, workflow and intervention. With >400 peer-review manuscripts (including first author papers in NEJM, Lancet Neurology, Radiology, Circulation, ANJR, Stroke), >50 editorials and opinion pieces, over 400 abstracts and >200 invite lectureships, Mayank has been an integral contributor in furthering the field of Stroke intervention research. He led

ESCAPE and SWIFT PRIME (both published in NEJM); the HERMES collaboration (>20 high impact publications including in Lancet, JAMA); ESCAPE-NA1 (published in Lancet) and has recently completed ESCAPE-NEXT and ESCAPE-MeVO trials. A citation index of >45000, an h-index of 83 and an i10 index of 338 (google scholar, Jan 2022) are testimony to Dr. Goyal's vast contribution and influence in the world of Stroke research.

He has many patents and had helped develop medical software and devices. He has received several honours and awards including the Outstanding Contributions in Research Award (American Society of Neuroradiology, 2020), and the Lifetime Contribution Award (Canadian Association of Radiology, 2018). He is also a Fellow of the esteemed Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He has recently launched a worldwide platform to accelerate stroke research: [letsgetproof.com](https://letsgetproof.com).



**Dr Ella Sherman**  
Stroke Consultant  
North Bristol NHS Trust

Ella Sherman graduated from Brighton and Sussex Medical School in 2012. Dr Sherman completed her geriatric medicine training in the Severn Deanery, which included a stroke fellowship year at Southmead Hospital, Bristol. Dr Sherman has always held a keen interest in simulation training and has been Course Director of The UK and ROI Acute Stroke Simulation Course since its inception in 2022. She currently works as a stroke consultant at Southmead Hospital.



**Dr Subramaniam Nagasayi**

Consultant Geriatrician

Hywel Dda University Health Board

Dr Subramaniam Nagasayi is a Consultant Geriatrician in Hywel Dda UHB (2018-present) with interests in Stroke Medicine and Movement disorders. He is a Fellow and Member of the Royal College of Physicians, London and MRCP Question Writer. He has a passion for improving patient care through quality improvement, teaching and leadership skills. He is a mentor for International Medical Graduates in Withybush General Hospital. He has organised a pilot Welsh-BIASP stroke simulation course in Hywel Dda, with future plans for regional simulation courses in South-west Wales. He is a keen cricketer and helps organise friendly inter-hospital matches in West Wales.