Research to Understand Stroke due to Haemorrhage

2025 Newsletter

A brief look back at 2025, as 2026 begins…

Welcome to the RUSH newsletter, which reflects on our activities in 2025. We tell the stories behind the scenes, amongst the amazing people who have worked together on the 19 papers published this year (listed at the end for our *keenest* readers!).

What's inside this newsletter?

Patient reference group: new members welcome!

Thanks to our fabulous Patient Reference Group (PRG), who oversee everything we do.

Above, you can see some of them at our annual face-to-face meeting in 2025, with Vega (front left), Anuka (rear right),

Rosemary (front) and Rustam (front, far right):

At the meeting, we had some very constructive discussions about the use of verbal consent and digital tools when recruiting people to research studies.

EUROPEAN STROKE MASTER

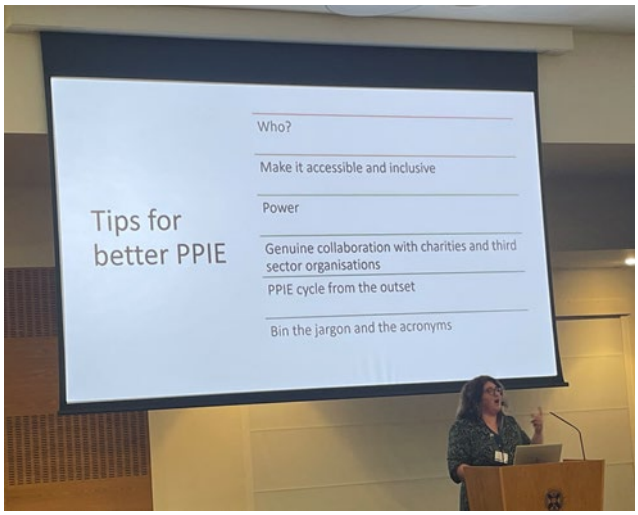
We were particularly pleased that we were able to involve members of the PRG in training the next generation of stroke doctors and researchers. The European Stroke Masters course – run by the University of Bern, in Switzerland – asked us to deliver a session on the lived experiences of stroke survivors. Our PRG members **Gwynneth Clay** and **Pete White** shared their own stories with this group of European doctors.

Pete White has been inspiring us with the way he deals with medical issues: here he is pedalling his recumbent e-trike, on which he has travelled nearly 260 miles while undergoing medical treatment this year.

Another member of the PRG, **Dawn Smith**, gave a keynote lecture to the Edinburgh Clinical Trial Management Course on 6 November, after she took part in our CARE pilot study a few years ago.

Dawn said, “I talked about my experience of taking part in the CARE trial, and what it had felt like to be a patient in a randomised clinical trial. I hope that by hearing about my personal perspective, particularly the uncertainty faced with having a cavernoma and the challenges that surround that, it will have

helped the trial managers at the course to understand why involving patients and organisations at the heart of the research process is so important.” Here’s Dawn at the lectern, giving the audience her top tips. Thanks, Dawn!



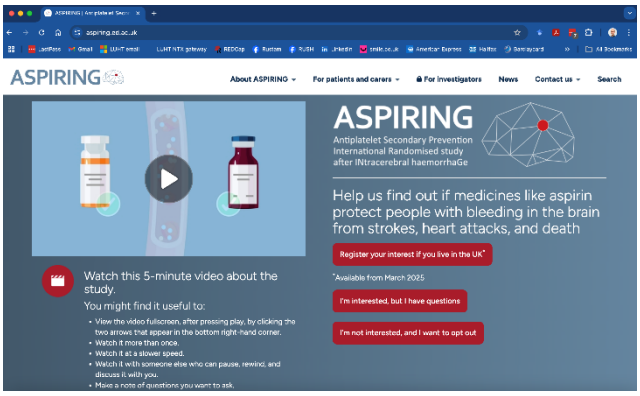
We’re always on the lookout for additional PRG members! If you are a brain haemorrhage survivor or carer interested in joining our PRG, please get in touch. We currently seek women, and people living with disability.

ASPIRING to progress

ASPIRING
Antiplatelet Secondary Prevention International Randomised study after INtracerebral haemorrhaGe

We have finally begun this enormous, international endeavour. We seek to recruit more than 4,000 brain haemorrhage survivors to this randomised study, comparing starting an antiplatelet drug (aspirin or clopidogrel) with standard care, to prevent further strokes, heart attacks and death. ASPIRING follows our earlier RESTART study that confirmed the safety of these drugs.

Watch a short video about the study: www.ASPIRING.ed.ac.uk



At the time of writing this newsletter, 32 hospitals in the UK and The Netherlands are running ASPIRING, where 38 people have been recruited into the study. That's just 4,110 more participants to go!

At the annual UK Stroke Forum in Aberdeen, Rustam was joined by two of the ASPIRING trial managers, Lynn Dinsmore and Stephanie Cholbi, pictured left-to-right in the picture opposite.

They promoted the ASPIRING study using some subtle marketing, with large badges made by Elaine, asking, "We're ASPIRING! Are you?" These badges became must-have "merch": Allan MacRaild, our lead research nurse was seen sporting one, too (page 16).

Addressing a question about clinical practice worldwide in one enormous study is challenging. Often, we have to obtain funding for separate studies. We tried to include India in ASPIRING from the beginning, but couldn't. Now, we're happy to say that Dr Jayaraj Pandyan and Dr Deepti Arora from Ludhiana in India received funding to run a very similar study across India.

The Indian Council of Medical Research has funded the BEAT-ICH study: Reducing the Burden of Cardiovascular Events with Antiplatelet Therapy in Patients with Intracerebral Haemorrhage.

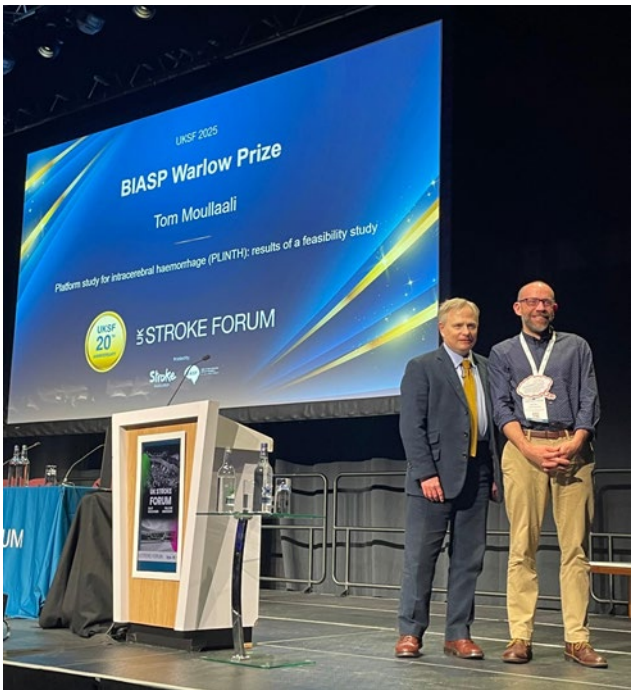
We will combine the results of BEAT-ICH with ASPIRING when both studies finish.

PLINTH progress

We have now completed the PLatform study for INTracerebral Haemorrhage (PLINTH), funded by the Chief Scientist Office of the Scottish Government. We are grateful to the 109 people in Lothian and 60 people in Lanarkshire who took part.

We found that recruiting a diverse population of people with brain haemorrhage to a future PLINTH is possible. We included people with varying degrees of stroke severity and other health problems, from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, with equal numbers of male and female participants.

We also found that a simple and stepwise approach to consent involving a short video before seeking verbal consent, followed by sharing detailed tailored information and seeking written consent was effective and acceptable.



Allan MacRaild (lead research nurse) and Tom Moullaali (clinical lecturer in neurology) presented the findings at the UK Stroke Forum in November 2025, which earned them the BIASP Warlow prize. The picture on page 5 shows Allan receiving the prize on behalf of Tom.

CARE-Aspirin

CareTrial
CAVERNOMAS: A RANDOMISED EFFECTIVENESS TRIAL

Following the completion of the CARE pilot study in 2024, we hope that the National Institute for UK Health and Care Research will award us funding to conduct a randomised study comparing aspirin with placebo to prevent stroke for people with symptomatic brain cavernoma.

WATCH THIS SPACE [ ].

TRIDENT results are out

TRIDENT
Triple therapy prevention of Recurrent Intracerebral Disease EveNts Trial

We led the UK part of this international randomised study, comparing a pill containing three low-dose blood pressure-lowering drugs versus a placebo for the prevention of stroke for brain haemorrhage survivors.

The results were revealed at the World Stroke Conference in October 2025. We found that people taking the triple pill had a lower chance (39% reduced risk) of having another stroke compared with those taking the placebo. The triple pill helped more people reach their target blood pressure (systolic below 130 mmHg). The triple pill was safe and well tolerated, with similar side effects to what is already known for these medicines. We expect the results

to be published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in 2026, and then change practice.

ENRICH-AF

We led the UK part of this international randomised study, comparing the blood thinner Edoxaban with standard care for the prevention of stroke for people with an irregular heart beat (atrial fibrillation) after brain haemorrhage.

The study recruited 947 people in 19 countries worldwide. The UK led recruitment, where 305 patients took part. The results of this study, which may change clinical practice, will be presented at the World Stroke Congress in October 2026.

What've we been up to?

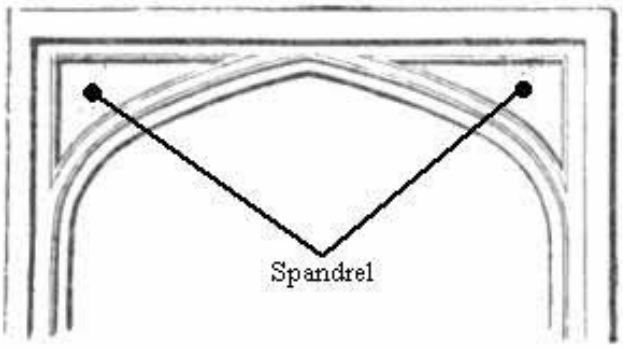
Rustam Al-Shahi Salman has been busy with leadership responsibilities, writing grants, publishing papers, doing clinical work, and supporting the team! He was recognised by being made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh this year.

Rustam's now the Deputy Chair of the National Institute for Health and Care Research's Health Technology Assessment Commissioned Funding Committee. It allocates a budget of many millions of pounds to research into the clinical and cost-effectiveness, and broader impact of healthcare treatments, tests, and other interventions. The research helps those who

plan, provide, or receive care from NHS and social care services.

Rustam continued his role as a Trustee on The Stroke Association's Board of Directors.

However, there's room for improvement! Rustam appeared on 'The Third Degree' quiz programme on Radio 4. He didn't know the name for the almost triangular space between one side of the outer curve of an arch, a wall, and the ceiling or framework. A spandrel of course! Rustam insists that the 'professors' let the students win by one point 😉



Rustam was invited to the University of Newcastle to deliver the annual Jacobson Lecture. The Jacobson visiting lectureship is offered on an annual basis to an eminent international neurologist with a significant academic and teaching profile. The invitation is mutually agreed by the consultant body (20+ consultants) working at the regional neuroscience centre in Newcastle. The lectureship has been operating on this basis for more than 40 years and was established following a significant charitable donation to the University and NHS departments of neurology in Newcastle by from Lionel Jacobson, a very generous philanthropic family.

Nesh Samarasekera was featured on the front cover of The Stroke Association's new research strategy 2026-2031 (see overleaf), which aims to build research capacity, increase funding, and support research with the greatest impact, focusing on areas identified by those affected by stroke.

Nesh was honoured to be invited to address the CONTRAST (Collaboration for New Treatments of Acute Stroke) annual meeting in the Netherlands.

Nesh is supervising **Gozde Caan,** who recently started her PhD in Precision Medicine, funded by the Medical Research Council.

Gozde's project focuses on developing a machine learning–assisted 'living' systematic review of brain haemorrhage that will combine data from both human and animal studies. This will be used to identify drugs and inflammatory pathways that could be targeted to reduce inflammation after brain haemorrhage.

Alice Hosking's main project this year has been her new baby, Finn. She has also been continuing work on her PhD looking at risk factors for brain haemorrhage and other strokes.

Alice has published an article reviewing what work has already been done about the many causes of brain haemorrhage, making the point that it's more complex than blaming brain haemorrhage on old age or high blood pressure alone.

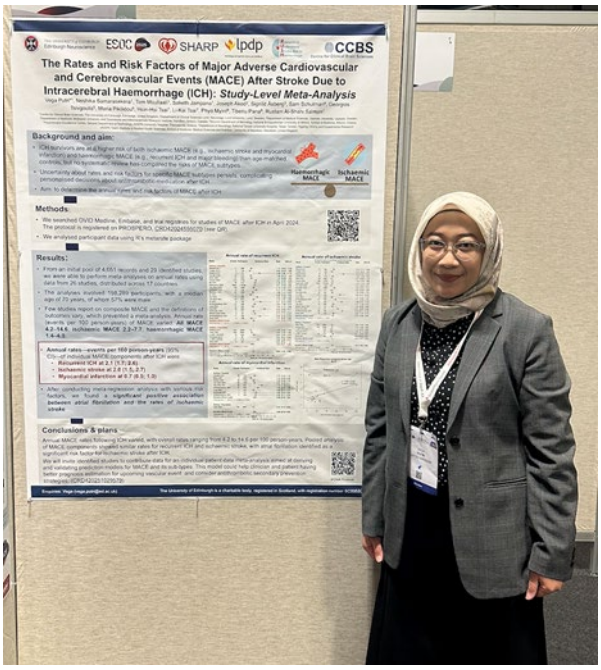
Alice also completed a project looking at what happens to people after strokes, using data collected routinely when people in Scotland attend hospital.

Her maternity leave turned out to be very productive, as Alice won the Chukwudi Ogbueche Award for first time presenter at the UK Stroke Forum 2025 for her talk, "The prognosis of ischaemic stroke and intracranial haemorrhage imaging-based subtypes: matched cases and controls in healthcare systems data." Here she is in action…

Vega Pratiwi Putri joined the RUSH team in January 2024. Originally from Indonesia, she received a full scholarship from the Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) to pursue her PhD in Edinburgh.

In 2025, Vega completed an international project investigating the risk of major clotting and

bleeding events after brain haemorrhage. She presented the results at the European Stroke Organisation Conference (below). The paper has been accepted for publication in the *International Journal of* Stroke.



Vega is collaborating with several researchers to build a very large dataset of as many patients as possible from the published studies. This will enable her to develop a tool that can more accurately predict a patient's risk of clotting and bleeding after brain haemorrhage.

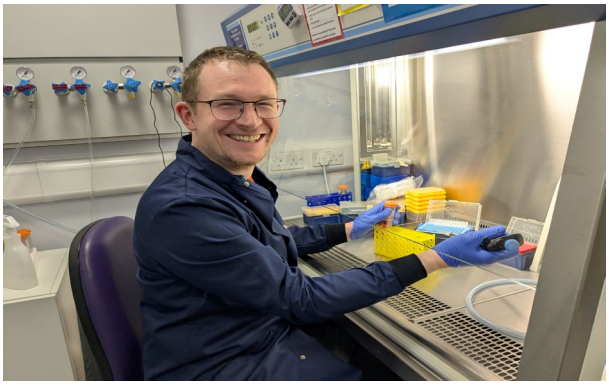
Tom Moullaali is on the final stretch of his higher speciality training in neurology and stroke medicine and will complete his training in February 2025. He has enjoyed being back in the stroke department which has involved him taking a senior role in the management of people with brain haemorrhage. He is leading the analysis of our PLINTH feasibility study. Tom presented the results at this year's UK Stroke Forum in Aberdeen, and won the BIASP Warlow prize (page 5).

Tom is now an honorary researcher in the Scottish Ambulance Service and has been working with paramedics, emergency doctors and data analysts to imagine new ways to improve the emergency care of people with suspected stroke. He has been a passenger in an ambulance to several suspected strokes to learn more.

Tom and his wife also welcomed a new baby girl to the family this year, pictured below...

Jamie Loan won an NES / CSO clinical lectureship. This allows him to spend alternate months doing his clinical neurosurgery training and continuing his research into inflammatory responses to brain haemorrhage.

He will be using blood samples donated by patients after brain haemorrhage as part of the NeuroInflammation after Cerebral Haemorrhage in Edinburgh (NICHE) study to identify proteins and immune cell responses to brain haemorrhage that are associated with outcome.



Jamie will then test if any of these responses can be modified using drugs in pieces of living human brain tissue that are donated by patients undergoing neurosurgical procedures for brain tumours and then exposed to simulated haemorrhage conditions in the lab. This will help us select the most promising drugs to use in future drug trials.

This work has also secured funding from the British Heart Foundation, the UK Dementia Research Institute and the Academy of Medical Sciences. The full plain English summary of Jamie's plans is available online.

Su Ya, an academic visitor from Huashan Hospital and Fudan University in China, joined the RUSH team for one year.

As a clinician with a strong interest in cerebral amyloid angiopathy (CAA), she worked closely with Rustam (pictured left) on the LINCHPIN studies of CAA in tissue from people who died after brain haemorrhage, and the PET scanning study that was done several years ago to identify brain haemorrhage survivors who might have CAA.

Under Rustam's guidance, Su Ya also started the CARE-ICH trial in China to assess the safety and tolerability of colchicine for preventing brain haemorrhage recurrence in people with CAA.

Su Ya says that she enjoyed exploring Scotland. She visited the dramatic landscapes of the Highlands and experienced the vibrant artistic atmosphere of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, making her year in Edinburgh both scientifically productive and culturally memorable!

Our **EMERGE research nurse team** (pictured opposite with Nesh) is led by Allan MacRaild.

EMERGE

Allan writes that if the old adage, “there’s no rest for the wicked” is true, then the Research Nurse team will definitely be on Santa’s naughty list! 2025 has been a very busy year.

The nurses were delighted to start recruitment to ASPIRING (pages 3-4). Senior Research Nurse, **Sarah Risbridger**, has co-ordinated the trial locally and steered the team in a very successful effort towards answering a clinically relevant question. The team’s dedication has made Edinburgh the leading site for recruitment to ASPIRING worldwide.

It was **Ikeoluwa Adekoya**’s turn to present at the EMERGE annual meeting this year. Ike has been a vitally important part of the team as Clinical Trials Assistant over the past couple of years. She undertook a three-month secondment within the Biofortification Hub in Norwich (University of East Anglia) at the start of the year. Developing Biofortified Tomatoes for Vitamin

D Sufficiency was the project, and it forms part of a randomised controlled trial which is now recruiting participants.

Ike delivered a superb presentation which highlighted her own research interests in food insecurity, hidden hunger and malnutrition. The secondment was an excellent development opportunity and has enhanced her laboratory skills, research experience and academic portfolio all of which bring great benefits to the team.

Senior Research Nurse, **Anuka Boldbaatar** was awarded a CSO NHS researcher development fellowship, which has afforded her time to develop a PhD proposal. She has been very grateful for the support of the RUSH Patient Reference Group in this endeavour, and we are all very hopeful it will lead to a successful application.

Allan attended the UK Stroke Forum and contributed to a number of sessions including supporting Tom Moullaali deliver the PLINTH presentation as a double act, which won them a prize (page 5)!

Allan flew flag for not only the Scottish Stroke Nurse Forum, but also wore one of Elaine's ASPIRING badges throughout

the conference, as you can see from the picture below!

World Stroke Day

We contributed to a stand in the main foyer at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on 29th October. The EMERGE team of nurses and many associated stroke specialists helped at the stand to raise awareness about stroke, its symptoms, and the importance of prevention efforts globally.

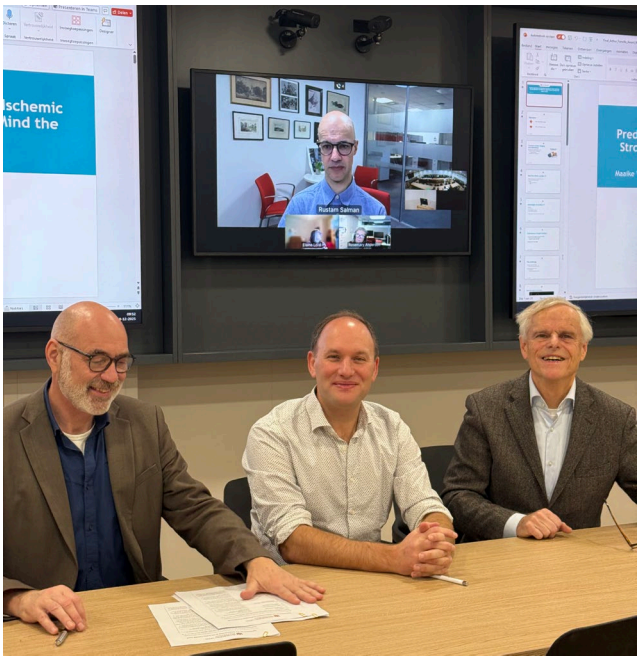
Many thanks to everyone who helped on the day and to the many members of the public and patients who stopped by.

Arthur Fonville Award for Stroke Research

Amsterdam hosted the annual ceremony for this award for a 1,500-3,000-word dissertation summarising a research project into any aspect of stroke, conducted by a medical student in year 3 to 6 at the University of Edinburgh or the University of Amsterdam.

This year's award winners were Maaike Wisse for their work, "Predicting Reduced Ejection Fraction in Acute Ischemic Stroke Patients: A Prediction Model from the Mind the Heart Study" and Jonelle Marasigan for their dissertation, "Beyond ischaemic lesion volume: MRI-derived lesion severity metrics and associations with functional outcome."

Notably, this year saw the Amsterdam UMC Foundation establish its own Arthur Fonville Fund, which will enable the Award to be run jointly by Amsterdam and Edinburgh. The agreement was signed by PWE de Wild (Amsterdam UMC Foundation), Prof. Dr. Jonathan Coutinho (Department of Neurology, Amsterdam UMC), Rustam (RUSH group, Edinburgh), and Joost Fonville (Arthur's father, on behalf of the Fonville family), pictured left-to-right in the photo below…



Raising money for RUSH

We are extraordinarily grateful to our donors.

Brain haemorrhage survivors have donated money to our projects to understand and treat people after brain haemorrhage.

Friends and relatives of the Fonville family continue to donate to the Arthur Fonville Award fund.

If you want to make a donation, you can find out how at www.RUSH.ed.ac.uk

Contact us

Feel free to contact us using any of the methods described below if you want to join us, or if you have questions, comments, or suggestions:

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Facebook www.facebook.com/bleedingstroke

2025 RUSH publications (highlights in red):

1. Putri V, Samarasekera N, Moullaali TJ, Jampana S, Aked J, Åsberg S, Schulman S, Tsivgoulis G, Pikilidou M, Tsai H-H, Tsai L-K, Myint PK, Pana T, Cordonnier C, Casolla B, Gaist D, Pezzini A, Camps-Renom P, Klijn CJM, Romoli M, Tveiten A, Liu M, Xu M-M, Wu B, Werring DJ, Nash PS, Banerjee G, Li L, Al-Shahi Salman R. Rates and Risk Factors for Major Adverse Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Events after stroke due to intracerebral haemorrhage: systematic review and study-level meta-analysis. *Int J Stroke* 2025 (in press)
2. Sandmann ACA, Vandertop WP, White PM, Verbaan D, Coutinho JM, Al-Shahi Salman R. Seizures and epilepsy in patients with untreated cerebral cavernous malformations: a prospective, population- based cohort study. *Neurology* 2025 (in press)
3. Puy L, Mazzoleni V, Samarasekera N, Morotti A, Tsai HH, Gaberel T, Cordonnier C, Bérézowski V. Hematoma Resorption in Intracerebral Hemorrhage: A Translational Overview on Pathophysiology, Biomarkers, and Innovative Therapies. *Transl Stroke Res* 2025;16:2350-2363
4. Almutairi A, Wirawan F, Lloyd A, Moullaali T, Clegg G. Methods for improving the identification of acute stroke during ambulance calls: A scoping review. *PLoS One* 2025;20(8):e0327653
5. Kim H, Nelson J, McCulloch CE, Hess C, Hetts SW, Flemming K, Lanzino GS, Koroknay-Pál P, Oulasvirta E, Laakso A, Lawton MT, Mohr JP, Morgan MK, Moayeri N, Zaroff JG, Chen X, Zhao Y, Al-Shahi Salman R. Risk of Future Hemorrhage from Unruptured Brain Arteriovenous Malformations: Multicenter Arteriovenous malformation Research Study (MARS). *JAMA Neurol* 2025 doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2025.3581
6. Al-Shahi Salman R, Kitchen N, Forsyth L, Ganesan V, Hall PS, Harkness K, Hutchinson PJA, Lewis SC, Radatz MWR, Turner C, Wade J, White DCS, White PM. Medical management and intervention (using neurosurgical resection or stereotactic radiosurgery) versus medical management alone for symptomatic brain cavernoma: the CARE pilot RCT. Health Technol Assess 2025;29(38). https://doi.org/10.3310/GJRS5321
7. Parry-Jones AR, Moullaali TJ, Sandset EC, Qureshi AI, Anderson CS, Steiner T. Importance of blood pressure lowering in patients with direct oral anticoagulant-associated intracerebral haemorrhage in the acute phase and for secondary prevention. *Eur Stroke J* 2025;10(1_suppl):46-55
8. Rodrigues MA, Seiffge D, Samarasekera N, Moullaali TJ, Wardlaw JM, Schreiber S, Behymer TP, Khandwala V, Stanton RJ, Vagal V, Woo D, Zedde M, Pascarella R, Charidimou A, Warren A, Greenberg SM, Eppinger S, Gattringer T, Casolla B, Cordonnier C, Werring DJ, Al-Shahi Salman R for the Edinburgh CAA criteria prognosis collaborators. Association between the Edinburgh CT and genetic diagnostic criteria for cerebral amyloid

angiopathy-associated lobar intracerebral haemorrhage and recurrent intracerebral haemorrhage: individual participant data meta-analysis. *Lancet Neurol* 2025;24:828-839

9. Sandmann ACA, Vandertop WP, White PM, Verbaan D, Coutinho JM, Al-Shahi Salman R for the Scottish Audit of Intracranial Vascular Malformations (SAIVMs) steering committee. Long-term outcomes of untreated cerebral cavernous malformations: a prospective, population-based cohort study. The Lancet Regional Health Europe 2025 (in press)
10. Ouyang M, You S, Moullaali TJ, Delcourt C, Sandset EC, Woodhouse L, Law ZK, Arima H, Butcher K, Edwards LS, Gupta S, Jiang W, Koch S, Potter J, Qureshi A, Robinson TG, Al-Shahi Salman R, Saver JL, Sprigg N, Wardlaw J, Anderson CS, Bath PM, Chalmers JP, Wang X. Trajectory of hematoma growth and functional recovery after intracerebral hemorrhage: a latent class analysis of BASC data. *Cerebrovascular Diseases* 2025 (in press)
11. GBD 2021 Global Subarachnoid Hemorrhage Risk Factors Collaborators … 66 authors … Al-Shahi Salman R … Feigin VL. Global, Regional, and National Burden of Nontraumatic Subarachnoid Hemorrhage: The Global Burden of Disease Study 2021. *JAMA Neurol* 2025;82:765-87
12. Dammann P, Santos AN, Mavarani L, Guey S, Chabriat H, Hervé D, Croft J, Renteria M, Jang D, Zhang J, Li D, Wu Z, Weng J-C, Petracca A, Fusco C, D'Agruma L, Castori M, Rath M, Pilz RA, Felbor U, Steinberg GK, Gu J, Bervini D, Goldberg J, Raabe A, Cervio A, Villamil F, Rosales J, Rauschenbach L, Rieß C, Oppong MD, Hannah G, Ahmadipour Y, Wrede K, Jabbarli R, Deuschl C, Li Y, Piedade GS, Köhrmann M, Frank B, Thomas W, Schmidt B, Overstijns M, Beck J, Fung C, Al-Shahi Salman R, Flemming KD, Lanzino G, Zafar A, Weinsheimer S, Nelson J, Zabramski JM, Akers A, Zafar A, Morrison L, McCulloch CE, Kim H, Sure U. Lifetime risk of first symptomatic ICH or seizure in familial cerebral cavernous malformations: A multicenter patient data analysis. *Neurology* 2025;105:e213798
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14. Samarasekera N, Ferguson K, Parry-Jones AR, Rodrigues M, Loan J, Moullaali TJ, Hughes J, Shoveller L, Wardlaw J, McColl B, Allan SM, Selim M, Norrie J, Smith C, Al-Shahi Salman R. Perihaematomal Oedema Evolution over 2 Weeks after Spontaneous Intracerebral Haemorrhage and Association with Outcome: A Prospective Cohort Study. *Cerebrovascular Diseases* 2025;54:298-307
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16. Taggart C, Ferry A, Barker S, Williams K, Souter G, Bularga A, Wereski R, McDermott MJ, Williams MD, Boeddinghaus JP, White C, Singh JS, Boath K, Fujisawa T, Tuck C, Briola A, Lewis S, Anand A, Dweck MR, Newby DE, Al-Shahi Salman R, Mills NLO, Chapman AR. Targeting investigation and treatment in patients with type 2 myocardial infarction (TARGET-Type 2): A pilot randomised controlled trial. *JACC Advances* 2025;4:101738
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