**EAST-Stroke**

**Brain Awareness Week: For publication on the 12 March 2025**

**Overview of project – Longer text**

**(For translation and use on website pages)**

Visual:



**Headline: EAST-STROKE: A potential new treatment strategy to prevent recurrent strokes in patients with acute ischemic stroke and Atrial Fibrillation patients**

The EAST-STROKE trial (‘Early treatment of Atrial fibrillation for Stroke prevention Trial in acute STROKE’) was funded by the EU Horizon programme to test a new treatment strategy for patients with an acute ischemic stroke and atrial fibrillation (AF).

AF is a condition where the heart beats irregularly and often too fast. This can lead to blood clots forming in the heart, which can travel to the brain, block the blood flow and cause an ischemic stroke. In addition, AF can cause tissue damage to the heart which could cause heart failure.

**What is Rhythm Control?**

Rhythm Control is an established treatment that can restore a normal heartbeat in people with AF. It uses medicines and ablation (a small surgical procedure to restore the normal heartbeat) but is currently not used in acute stroke patients.

The EAST-STROKE trial will test if early treatment of stroke patients who have AF with Rhythm Control in combination with usual treatment of stroke can help prevent further strokes, heart attacks and other heart problems.

**Why is this study important?**

People with stroke and AF have a high risk of having another stroke or of having heart problems. If the EAST-STROKE trial shows that Rhythm Control is safe and helpful, it could become a new standard treatment for stroke patients with AF, helping thousands of people around the world.

Professor Götz Thomalla, project coordinator and Director of the Department of Neurology at University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf, explains: “If the study confirms our early findings, it could change the way we treat stroke patients with atrial fibrillation worldwide and help prevent many new strokes.”

**Who is leading the study?**

The study is led by scientists from the University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE) in Germany. It is supported by the European Union with 7 million euros in funding.

**Where will the study take place?**

The trial started in early 2025 and will last for six years. It will begin in Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Australia. Later, other countries like the UK, Canada and Brazil will join. In total, 1746 patients are expected to take part. This international design of the trial will support the global implementation of the trial results and treatment guidelines.

**What do we hope to achieve?**

If the study is successful, Rhythm Control could become a regular treatment for stroke patients with AF. Doctors could use it worldwide to help prevent strokes, additional strokes and heart attacks.

Arlene Wilkie, Director General of the Stroke Alliance for Europe (SAFE), states: “This trial has the potential to improve stroke care across the globe, giving patients better outcomes and reducing the burden of stroke on individuals, families and healthcare systems.”

For more information about this project, see video: <https://youtu.be/F3xRGHexgws>

Or visit the EAST-STROKE website: <https://east-stroke.eu/>

Or contact research@safestroke.eu

A close up of a sign

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

The project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 101156541

**NEWS page – alternative shorter text**

**(For translation and use for news / newsletters)**

**Visual:**



**Headline: EAST-STROKE: New EU-funded trial aims to prevent additional strokes in patients with stroke and atrial fibrillation patients**

On Brain Awareness Week’s third day we are focusing on a new international study, the EAST-STROKE trial, which is investigating a potential new treatment to prevent new strokes in patients with acute ischemic stroke and atrial fibrillation (AF). Funded by the EU Horizon programme, the trial will test whether Rhythm Control, a method to restore normal heart rhythm, can reduce the risk of further strokes and heart problems in stroke patients with AF.

AF is a common heart condition that causes an irregular heartbeat, increasing the risk of blood clots that can lead to an ischemic stroke. While Rhythm Control is already used to treat AF, it has not yet been widely applied to acute stroke patients. The EAST-STROKE trial aims to change that by integrating this treatment early after a stroke, alongside standard care.

“If the study confirms this new treatment strategy, it could change the way we treat stroke patients with atrial fibrillation worldwide and help prevent many new strokes,” said Professor Götz Thomalla, project coordinator and Director of Neurology at the University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE).

Launched in early 2025, the six-year trial will enroll 1,746 patients across Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Australia, with further expansion planned to the UK, Canada and Brazil. The study’s international scope aims to ensure that its findings can be widely implemented.

Arlene Wilkie, Director General of the Stroke Alliance for Europe (SAFE), emphasized the potential impact: “This trial has the potential to improve stroke care across the globe, giving patients better outcomes and reducing the burden of stroke on individuals, families and healthcare systems.”

If successful, the EAST-STROKE trial could lead to a major shift in stroke treatment, helping thousands of patients worldwide avoid recurrent strokes and heart complications.

For more information about this project, see video: <https://youtu.be/F3xRGHexgws>

Or visit the EAST-STROKE website: <https://east-stroke.eu/>

Or contact research@safestroke.eu

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**Social x 1 post**

**Visual:** <https://youtu.be/F3xRGHexgws>

Facebook / LinkedIn

Brain Awareness Week day 3: Launching EAST-STROKE

The EAST-STROKE trial is a new international study testing a new treatment strategy to prevent recurrent strokes in stroke patients with atrial fibrillation (AF). Funded by the @EU Horizon programme, the trial will investigate whether Rhythm Control, a treatment that restores normal heart rhythm, can reduce the risk of recurrent strokes and other complications in acute stroke patients with AF.

With 1,746 patients participating across Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia and beyond, this study could change stroke care worldwide.

Professor @Götz Thomalla (University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf) explains: “If the study confirms our treatment strategy, it could change how we treat stroke patients with atrial fibrillation worldwide and help prevent many new strokes."

Director General @Arlene Wilkie (SAFE) adds: “This trial has the potential to improve stroke care across the globe, giving patients better outcomes and reducing the burden of stroke on individuals, families and healthcare systems.”

🔗 Learn more: [link to full text on your website or EAST-Stroke website]

#BrainAwarenessWeek

#StrokeResearch   
#AtrialFibrillation

#EAST-STROKE

#StrokeAllianceforEurope

Twitter / X

**Visual:** <https://youtu.be/F3xRGHexgws>

The new EAST-STROKE trial is testing if Rhythm Control can prevent strokes in acute stroke patients with atrial fibrillation (AF).

Prof. @Götz Thomalla: “This could prevent many new strokes”

🔗 Learn more: [link to full text on your website or EAST-Stroke website]

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#AtrialFibrillation

#EAST-STROKE

#StrokeAllianceforEurope