Desmond O’Neill

The global burden of stroke outlined by Valery Feigin and colleagues’ Article (Jan 18, p 245)1 is likely to be a substantial underestimation in view of the consequences of stroke disease on conditions other than acute stroke, which substantially affect health and wellbeing.2 Overt and occult cerebrovascular disease, both large and small vessel, have been recognised to contribute to Alzheimer’s disease and vascular dementia.3

Less generally acknowledged is the role of cerebrovascular disease in a range of other conditions including gait disorders,4 depression,5 and oropharyngeal dysphagia,2 particularly in older people. Inclusion of these endpoints in strategies for stroke prevention not only adds to the urgency and impetus for their implementation, but will also provide a multiplier for the health benefits of such programmes.

I declare that I have no competing interests.