

ARRHYTHMIA ALLIANCE GLOBAL PROJECT

The Arrhythmia Alliance (A-A) Global Project is a united approach for greater impact for change and awareness of arrhythmias on an international scale. An alliance of countries provides for an international union of medical professionals, patients, carers, and patient groups working on the mission and goals of A-A to strengthen the patient voice in health care. The mission of the A-A Global Project is to ensure that patients with heart rhythm disorders across the globe will have equal access to advice and support, irrespective of where they live.

Arrhythmia Alliance (A-A) continues to be successful in its global outreach to establish national partners in Europe and other countries. A-A National Partners have been established in Sweden, Portugal, Czech Republic, Italy, Argentina, China, Japan, and South Africa. A-A National Partners establish a patient support organisation comprised of healthcare professionals, patients/carers, and allied professionals. This group works toward the mission and aims of A-A in promoting awareness of heart rhythm disorders and providing education and support for patients, carers and healthcare professionals in their country.

A-A also offers affiliation to international patient groups, healthcare professionals, and organisations. Affiliates benefit from medical and patient booklets that are available for translation, which have been developed and accredited by the A-A Medical Advisory Committee and endorsed by the Department of Health in the UK. Affiliation also provides an important link to A-A for collaboration on relevant projects and campaigns, and for healthcare professionals to establish a platform for disseminating best practice methods.

A-A offers all countries an opportunity for global collaboration to raise awareness of heart rhythm disorders with the annual event, World Heart Rhythm Week (WHRW) 7 – 13 June, 2010. WHRW encourages A-A National Partners, affiliates, and supporters in countries across the globe to join forces in effective awareness-raising. For more information on WHRW email mary@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk. A-A National Partners benefit from the opportunity to participate in an international roundtable concerning on-going and future collaborations for A-A campaigns and initiatives, and share best practice methods at the annual Heart Rhythm Congress (HRC) www.heartrhythmcongress.com.

The A-A Global Project creates a platform for unifying best practices in arrhythmia services while influencing European and international health initiatives and policies. Founder and Trustee of A-A, Trudie Lobban, was invited to participate at the 2009 Eucomed Medtech Conference, 6-8 October, EU policy debate, 'What should define value?: Assessing Health Technology.' This conference was an excellent opportunity for A-A to present the patient perspective on quality of healthcare and the uptake of innovative and cost-efficient technologies in Europe. For information on Eucomed and the 2009 conference: www.medtechforum.eu/



A-A undertakes the role of advocate for improved diagnosis and treatment of arrhythmias in other countries to encourage open debate and ongoing collaboration among healthcare professionals, heart rhythm organisations, and societies. The most recent A-A National Partner has been established in South America in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Trudie Lobban was welcomed with appreciation for her efforts to help guide them in establishing as a national partner and providing A-A publications and materials for translation.



Trudie Lobban, fondatore de
Arrhythmia Alliance.

(Caption: Trudie Lobban in Argentina explaining the importance of ensuring the patient's voice is at the centre of healthcare.)

A-A will continue to be instrumental in forging new future collaborative campaigns for national partners in Europe and other countries. In the UK, the *Restart the Heart* campaign aims to raise public awareness of the importance of early defibrillation with the placement of AEDs (Automatic External Defibrillator) to aid in the prevention of SCA (Sudden Cardiac Arrest) in public areas in local communities. A-A has been influential in promoting this initiative in Europe and South America. A national AED campaign in Italy, *Progetto Vita*, translated Project Life, has been successful in placing more than 30 AEDs in the small community of Piacenza, Italy. Part of the *Progetto Vita* campaign in Piacenza is the educational project which has been developed in primary schools to teach children the vital steps of using a defibrillator. A-A Argentina has developed a successful AED campaign with the support of Heartbeat International to help fund the placement of AEDs in Buenos Aires and surrounding towns.



In addition to A-A's collaborative efforts to place AEDs across Europe, is their new partnership with TV2 Barcelona. The public television station is developing a public service documentary entitled, 'Sudden Cardiac Arrest and Defibrillation in Europe.' This effort will provide an effective foundation for A-A to develop a unified international campaign to ensure that AEDs are available in public locations throughout Europe.

The new year will see more global expansion for A-A as healthcare professionals across the globe strive to meet the need for increased information and support for those with heart rhythm disorders. In 2009, health reform initiatives in China and Russia have opened the door for improved quality care, health technology, and education for arrhythmia services. A-A is presently working in collaboration with these countries to provide the much needed A-A support and information.

The *Toolkit to Establish an Arrhythmia Alliance National Partner* has been developed as a guide for countries to establish a patient support organisation based on the model of A-A in the UK and in accordance to its mission and goals. For more information on the A-A Global Project and to order a free copy of the toolkit contact: mary@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk