

Traumatic Brain Injury gains momentum –79th World Health Assembly in Geneva



The Global Coalition for Traumatic Brain Injury meeting with ministers



The NIHR Research Group and SBNS members at the World Health Assembly



Prof Hutchinson in discussion with the Director-General of the WHO – Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyous

An estimated 69 million people around the world experience TBI, across all ages. It's the leading cause of death and disability in people under 40, with a disproportionate impact on those living in low- and middle-income countries.

UK researchers from the SBNS Global Initiative and NIHR Research Group on Acquired Brain and Spine Injury are proud to be co-leading an international collaborative – the Global Coalition for TBI – and we are advocating for TBI to be recognised as a notifiable and chronic condition, firmly placing it at the centre of global health policy.

On Sunday 17th May 2026, a team of academics and clinicians from UK (NIHR Research Group and SBNS) were part of a delegation at the 79th World Health Assembly hosting a Side Event on recognising TBI as a chronic and notifiable condition as part of the Global Coalition for TBI (tbicoalition.com). The Global Coalition for TBI brings together over 130 organisations and several member states, all working with a shared goal.

The event was supported by the NIHR Global Health Research Group on Acquired Brain and Spine Injury (<https://new.absi.world/>), co-led by Prof Hutchinson and Prof Tony Figaji (Cape Town). Prof Tariq Khan and Dr Almas. Khattak (Peshawar, Pakistan). Special thanks goes to Sara Venturini who led the publication of the accompanying manuscript:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(26\)00063-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(26)00063-X/fulltext)

The event was also supported by the G4 Alliance and Dr Gail Rosseau chair of the Board of Directors. The SBNS is a member of the G4 Alliance advocating for advances in global surgical, obstetric, trauma and anesthesia care. Dr Rosseau is delivering the Geoffrey Jefferson lecture at SBNS 100.

Initiatives like this are important as they expand beyond the academic context alone and reach other audiences including decision makers and those heavily involved in health policy.

Our event brought together a range of key stakeholders including academics, patients with lived experience, Ministries of Health, WHO representatives and more, engaging in discussions about why a resolution on TBI is timely and essential. Ministries of Health and their representatives from Pakistan, Cambodia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, South Sudan, Tanzania and Qatar all featured in panel discussions in support of a TBI resolution, highlighting how this is relevant to their respective countries, and asking for global collaboration.

The Director General and the Acting Regional Emergencies Director of the World Health Organization's Eastern Mediterranean Office also spoke in support of the initiative, emphasising the importance of better prevention, surveillance, and treatment for TBI in the region.

Patients with lived experience were at the centre of the discussion too, with two TBI survivors sharing their personal stories, which are complemented by the [TBI Storybook](#) a free resource created by the TBI coalition showing TBI testimonials from all over the world.

Working towards a major policy change like this takes continuous effort over years. Our work has included a side event on TBI held at the 78th World Health Assembly in 2025, and recent publication of a [Viewpoint paper in the Lancet Global Health](#), highlighting the reason why TBI belongs on the global health agenda.

Great momentum was generated during the 79th WHA, and there is now a clear path towards proposing a TBI resolution next year at the 80th WHA in May 2027.

UK collaborators at the 79th WHA: Prof Peter Hutchinson, Mr Alexis Joannides, Miss Sara Venturini, Dr Tom Bashford, Dr Brandon Smith, Dr Laura Hobbs, Dr Tamara Banerjee, Dr Shobhana Nagraj, Miss Saniya Mediratta, Prof Charlie Whiffin, Jay Rav. International collaborators of the NIHR ABSI Group also present were Prof Tariq Khan and Dr Almas Khattak (Peshawar, Pakistan), and Dr Ursula Rohlwink and Prof Tony Figani (Cape Town).

