

Science

Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 06:17 (GMT+7)

Father' of stroke prevention comes to Vietnam

Professor Valery Feigin - the world's leading scientist in stroke prevention research, came to Vietnam to attend the VinFuture Foundation's Science and Technology Week 2024.



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afternoon of December 3. Photo: *Viet Hung*

On the afternoon of December 3, Professor Valery Feigin, 70 years old, came to Hanoi as a speaker at the "Science for Life" seminar held on December 5. He is the director of the National Institute of Stroke and Applied Neuroscience (NISAN) at the Auckland University of Technology, the only research institute specializing in the epidemiology and prevention of neurological disorders in New Zealand. He is a pioneer behind international developments in the field of stroke and epidemiology.

Professor Valery Feigin is the author of one of the world's largest studies on stroke, heart disease, diabetes and dementia using the "Stroke Riskometer" app. The app, developed in 2014, allows users to assess their personal stroke risk on their smartphone or tablet, and assess lifestyle factors to prevent stroke, heart disease and dementia. When viewed in aggregate, the data can provide unprecedented insights into some of the world's most common infectious diseases.

Coming to Vietnam this time, Professor Valery Feigin said he will share the initiative that he and his research team have implemented over the past 10



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evidence on its effectiveness.

Professor Feigin began his career as a neurologist but switched his focus to research after a stroke took his father's life. "My father's death from a stroke was a huge shock to me and my family. He was a professor at Novosibirsk Medical University in Russia, a diligent and talented teacher at the peak of his career. He was very healthy and had few cardiovascular risk factors. When my father had a stroke, I asked myself 'Why?'. It was his death that inspired me to study strokes and how to prevent them," Feigin said.

Professor Feigin's father, Lev, seemed to have few obvious risks. "He was relatively young, 50, generally healthy, just a little overweight. He smoked, and the most important risk factor was high blood pressure." Back then, half a century ago, the world had no solution for preventing strokes, even though they were a deadly disease.

Professor Feigin helped change that, winning numerous awards for his stroke research that began after his father's death. Over four decades, Professor Feigin and his colleagues' research helped establish stroke as the second leading cause of death and disability in

effective enough because they often targeted people at high risk of cardiovascular disease. "But the problem is that the majority of strokes and heart attacks occur in people at low to moderate risk. Eighty percent of people who have strokes do not have a high risk of cardiovascular disease," said Professor Feigin.

Another big misconception is that stroke is not just an old man's disease, with data showing that more and more people under 65 are having strokes. Since this is a result of lifestyle factors, Professor Feigin says we can control the risk by being aware of it. "Before we have a higher risk of stroke later in life, we have the ability to lower it. That's why young people need to know about the risks of stroke and can reduce them through diet and lifestyle changes," Professor Feigin emphasizes.



Professor Valery Feigin is among the most cited scientists in the world. Photo: *Royal Society*

provides the perfect interface for delivering health information about stroke, its risk factors, and how to manage them. According to Professor Feigin, 4 billion people in the world live on \$5.50 a day. They do not have access to healthcare, so Stroke Riskometer can be a reliable source of information about stroke and its risks.

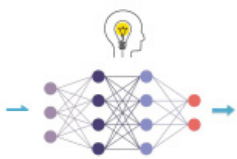
Born and raised in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, near Russia's borders with Kazakhstan and Mongolia, Professor Feigin chose to pursue a career in medicine, following in the footsteps of his father, a professor at the city's medical school. Always fascinated by the brain, he briefly trained as a psychiatrist before deciding to switch to neurology. After graduating from Novosibirsk Medical School in Russia, Professor Feigin moved from Moscow to the Mayo Clinic in the United States and Erasmus University in the Netherlands for advanced training in neurology and clinical epidemiology.

After finishing his internship in 1985, Professor Feigin took up a research position at the SB RAMS Institute of Internal Medicine in Novosibirsk and became head of the Department of Cerebrovascular Diseases. But his research remained largely unknown until

Association conference in Kyoto, Japan. "They invited only two people from the Soviet Union. For some reason, they chose me and a professor from Latvia. But I was the only one from Russia," Professor Feigin recalled with a laugh.

During his career, Professor Feigin has authored or co-authored more than 850 scholarly publications (including more than 440 journal articles, including 109 articles in The Lancet), 12 handbooks, 26 books, and 4 patents. Professor Feigin's erudition in the fields of neurology and epidemiology is recognized worldwide. According to Web of Science, Valery Feigin is among the world's 1% most cited scientists in all scientific fields in 2018, 2020, 2021, and 2022. From 2021 to 2022 alone, his citation rate was once every 15 minutes and increasing.

An Khang



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