

The Doctorate in Education is a course offered jointly by School of Education, University of Sheffield through a collaboration with St. Catherine's School, Malta. It is based on three annual study schools held in Malta, for a minimum of four years. Together with their supervisors, students progress through their dissertation and then receive tuition, present work and receive constructive feedback during each study school.

Being a Consultant Neuroradiologist, this programme allowed me to merge my field of work with education, thus allowing me to explore the population's knowledge and educational needs regarding stroke.

Stroke remains a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. Recent medical advances in the treatment of stroke have been the key to changing a preventable catastrophe to a potentially treatable disease. However, treatment is restricted to a time-window, which has led to the aphorism "Time is Brain". Prompt presentation to emergency services has been extensively linked to patients' knowledge about their symptomatology and recommended actions in stroke, which is subsequently influenced by more complex psychological 'barriers'. The aim of this study was to explore and quantify stroke knowledge in Malta and to identify any potential educational lacunae in this respect. The data generated could in turn be used to adapt local practices and improve patients' long-term outcomes. This required an in-depth investigation of the stroke experience as recalled by affected patients, followed by the development of a quantitative tool which was later used to generalize the findings. For these purposes, a mixed methods approach was utilized.

The fact that the study schools were held in Malta proved to be a crucial benefit since it reduced traveling time, thus allowing me to optimise the time spent on my actual studies. The study school concept was also a valuable source of peer support and constructive feedback that facilitated the arduous journey, that a doctorate programme can entail.

Completion of my studies would not have been possible without the supportive structure established by the University of Sheffield and St. Catherine's School, Malta. Moreover, the programme was funded by the Endeavour B Scholarship governmental scheme, which provided me with the financial opportunity that was necessary to complete my studies.

---

**Dr. Reuben Grech** MD (Melit.), PhD (Sheffield), MSc (Edin.), MRCS (Edin.), FRCR (UK), FFR RCSI (Irel.), EDiR (Vienna), EDIHNR (Vienna), EDINR (Vienna).

*Consultant Neuro and General Radiologist*

*Medical Imaging Department*

*Mater Dei Hospital*