



Editorial

The Swiss Brain Health Plan in the International Context

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While the term mental health officially exists since the foundation of the WHO in 1948 and the related concept of «mental hygiene» was used in the literature already in 1843, the term brain health first appeared only in 1989 [1,2]. Until 2011, there were fewer than five articles per year in PubMed on brain health; subsequently, the number of publications increased exponentially [2]. This evolution is due to the recognition of brain health as an important mediator of other health and societal outcomes, but also to the accumulating evidence for a high and increasing burden of brain disorders (and the related urge to prevent them) [3–6].

Norway and Poland established national brain health plans in 2018 and 2019, respectively. In 2022, the WHO published a definition and white paper on brain health [3]. On 27 May 2022, the 75th World Health Assembly approved an intersectoral global action plan (IGAP) to promote brain health and prevent brain disorders [7]. Additional national plans were developed more recently in several countries, including Finland, Uruguay, Germany, and Italy. Brain health plans were also published by international organizations, such as the EAN (in 2022) and the AAN (in 2023) [8,9]. In 2025, a 56 Million European Partnership Call on brain health was opened by the EU. Brain Health, despite persisting discussions about the best definition, has become today a public health priority [2,3,10,11].

In Switzerland, a working group of over 50 scientists and clinicians across different disciplines and institutions led in 2022 to the publication of a «call for action» [12]. In 2023, the Swiss Health Plan (SBHP) was launched [13]. The SBHP considers **neurological and psychiatric** disorders as two sides of the same coin, favors **multidisciplinary and interprofessional** approaches **across the entire life course** [12–15], and fosters both **individual** and **societal** strategies to promote brain health (and functioning) and prevent brain disorders. Special attention is devoted to women and **disadvantaged** groups, new **technologies, data-** and **AI-based** approaches, to the burden and stigma of brain disorders, and positive economic implications of brain health (**Brain Capital**) [13–15].

The Swiss Federation of Clinical Neurosocieties (SFCNS), founded in 2008 to foster multidisciplinary, patient advocacy, and collaborations with academia, industry, governmental, and non-governmental agencies, was the first society to support the SBHP. Subsequently, other societies, including the Swiss Society of Neuroscience, the Swiss Society of Public Health, and the Swiss Society of General Internal Medicine, also decided to endorse the initiative. In 2025, the Swiss Brain Health Foundation (**SBHF**) was founded to support (also financially) the implementation of the SBHP (<https://swissbhf.ch/#> accessed on 31 July 2025).

The following box presents some of the activities that, in line with the five strategic pillars of the SBHP, have been developed since its launch in 2023.



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1 Awareness about brain health

Events on brain health (BH) and prevention of brain disorders (e.g., stroke, dementia, depression) were organized across the country. In 2025, an international summit was organized in Bern, during which 22 plans from around the globe were presented [16]. Active collaborations were established with WHO, WFN, WPA, EAN, EBC, EPA, WSC, and regional/national BH initiatives (in Cameroon, Singapore, Germany, Italy, and Texas). Representatives of the SBHP have spoken at the European Parliament, the United Nations in New York, the WEF in Davos, and the EAN and EPA congresses.

2 Interprofessional training

A postgraduate certificate of advanced studies (CAS) in brain health at the University of Bern was successfully launched in 2024 (Jung, 2025; see publication in this issue). Educational programs on BH in schools are currently being discussed.

3 Research on brain health determinants

Studies on the **burden** (and costs) of **brain** (with the IHME) and **sleep disorders** (with the Swiss Sleep Society, SSSC) in Switzerland are currently being conducted. A questionnaire to assess brain health (the **Swiss Brain Health Questionnaire** is presently validated (Monschein, 2025, see publication in this issue). Collaborations were established with NCCR projects (currently under evaluation). The patronage was extended to several research projects, including a project in Bern supported by Innosuisse on AI and blockchain (BH).

4 Brain health promotion for prevention

A **campaign to prevent migraine** was launched with the Swiss Headache Society (<https://www.headache.ch/migraene/migraine-friendly-workspace>, accessed on 31 July 2025). Collaborations were established with **dementia BH services** in Geneva [15,17]. With the support of Promotion Santé Suisse and the Swiss Brain Health Foundation (<https://swissbhf.ch/#>, accessed on 31 July 2025), a national implementation of the SBHP is being prepared in collaboration with the Federal Office of Public Health and the Conference of Cantonal Health Directors.

5 Empowering patients and caregivers

Patients, caregivers, and patient organizations are active on the board and the extended board of the SBHP and at our events. Several meetings with patient organizations also take place at the national and regional levels.

In sum, Switzerland has rapidly recognized the urgent need to promote brain health and prevent brain disorders. Nation-wide multidisciplinary, interprofessional, and intersectoral collaborations are being established to successfully implement the SBHP, taking advantage of already existing, more focused initiatives.

The recent creation in Bern of an International Alliance on Brain Plans and the decision to entrust the Lancet Commission on Brain Health to the Chair of the SBHP document the exceptional momentum of our initiative [16].

Let us join forces for a healthier, happier, fairer, and wealthier future!

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Abbreviations

AAN	American Academy of Neurology
BH	Brain Health
CAS	Certificate of Advanced Studies
EAN	European Academy of Neurology
EBC	European Brain Council
EPA	European Psychiatry Association
EU	European Union
IGAP	Intersectoral global action plan
IHME	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation
SBH	Swiss Brain Health Foundation
SBHP	Swiss Brain Health Plan
SSSSC	Swiss Society for Sleep Research, Sleep Medicine, and Chronobiology
SFCNS	Swiss Federation of Clinical Neurosocieties
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFN	World Federation of Neurology
WPA	World Psychiatry Association
WHO	World Health Organization

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