

## Educate kindergarteners to strike the stroke with FAST Heroes 112

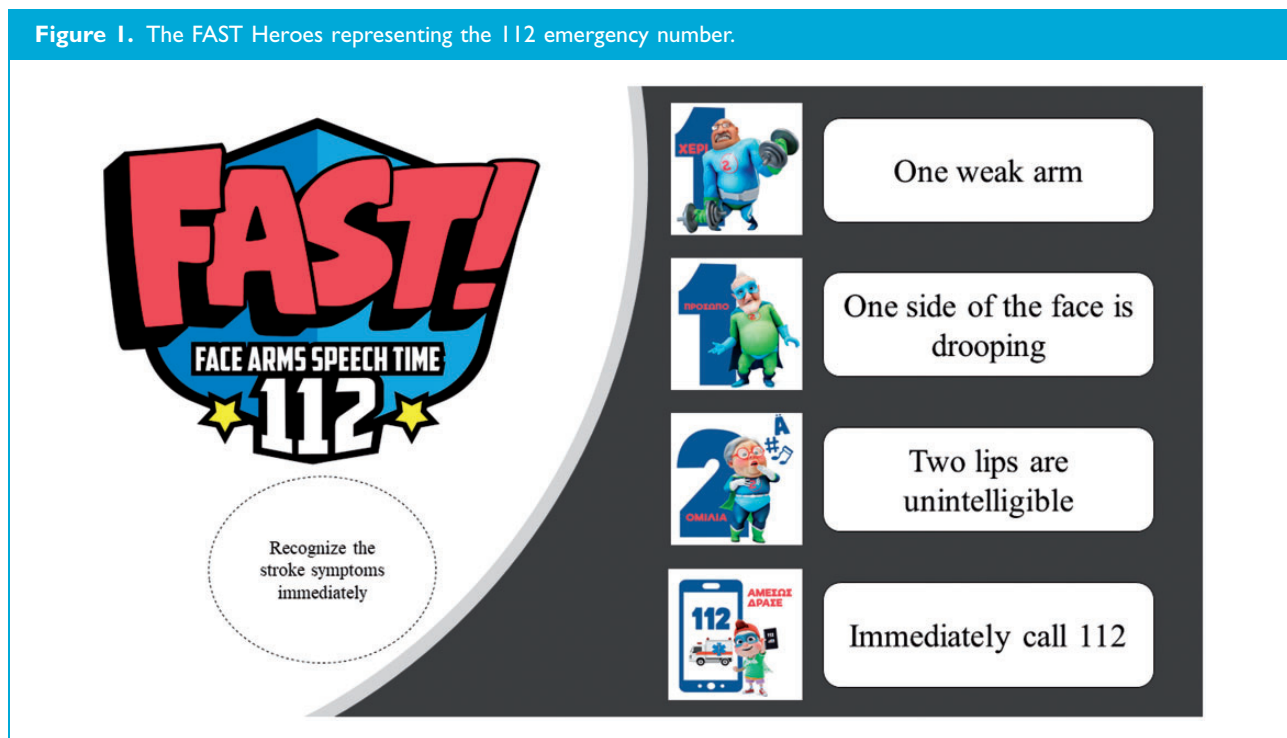
Dear Editor,

Stroke is a time-sensitive emergency, necessitating an important chain of actions leading to fast and accurate diagnosis.<sup>1</sup> FAST campaigns educate the general population worldwide to recognize the stroke symptoms and the appropriate course of actions in such a case, and therefore be able to reach treatment rapidly.<sup>2</sup>

The FAST mnemonic was translated into Greek Language by the Hellenic Neurological Society and the Hellenic Society of Cerebrovascular Diseases. The corresponding acronym in Greek is X.O.Π.A.; X for Χέρι (/xeri/—Arm), O for Ομιλία (/omilia/—Speech), Π for Πρόσωπο (/prosopo/—Face), and A for

Αμέσως (/amesos/—Time). An ongoing initiative at the University of Macedonia, Department of Educational and Social Policy, is the X.O.Π.A. Heroes 112 project. This ongoing research and educational program is geared to kindergarten classes and uses four superheroes, named after the FAST acronym, so that kids feel more connected and related to the stroke concept: Franc (Face), Armando (Arm), Sophia (Speech), and Timmy (Time); the equivalent Greek superheroes are Χάρης (/xaris/—Armando), Όλγα (/olga/—Sophia), Πέτρος (/petros/—Franc), and Αλέξης (/alexis/—Timmy). Additionally, memorizing the symptoms is also linked to the pan-European emergency number, 112. That is, the number is used as a mnemonic, with the first digit standing for one side of the face drooping, the second for one weak arm, and the third for the two unintelligible lips (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The FAST Heroes representing the 112 emergency number.



To date, our educational intervention targeted over 150 kindergarten children with promising results. Sociology research points to the fact that children spend a lot of time with their grandparents.<sup>3</sup> But as the lifespan increases, most grandparents are at high risk for stroke across cultures.<sup>4</sup> A novelty of this program is the training of kindergarteners along with grandparents as well as creating crystallized knowledge retention.

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