



Stroke *Progress*

Stroke Foundation news for health *professionals*

July 2016



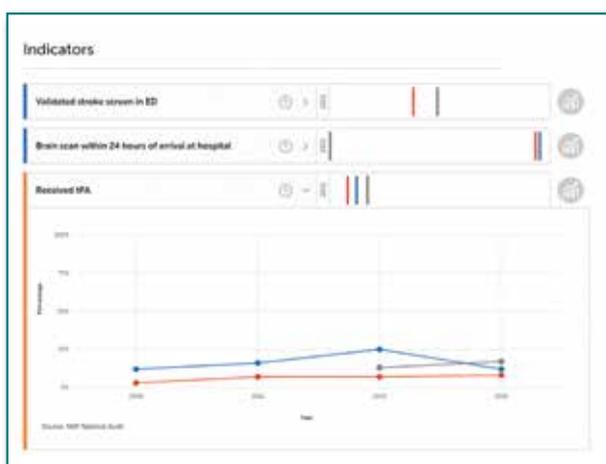
InformMe proves *infatuating* for health professionals

InformMe is cementing its place as a comprehensive source of information and training. Since Stroke Foundation launched the online platform in March, the number of health professionals referring to it and registering as users has grown to more than 1,300.

A main attraction of the site is its ever-expanding content. Dozens of Cochrane systematic reviews have recently been added to the topics in our Learning & Resources section, giving an overview of the current research in the field and adding to the evidence base used in our *Clinical Guidelines for Stroke Management*.

We also regularly add new videos, such as the monthly webinars from the Victorian Stroke Clinical Network on topics such as pain and life after stroke, and links to useful websites. These include the new Western Australia Stroke Map, with locations and details of services across our largest state.

The increase in resources parallels that of our audience, with 50% more people coming to InformMe in May than in April. Of these users, over 1,100 have registered and gained access to their hospital's audit data, to use in their own quality improvement plans.



Registering for InformMe also gives you access to online training modules. These are constantly being expanded and updated in line with clinical practice and your needs. The newest update will be the Chronic Stroke Review Tool and Intervention Guide (Rev-TIG), developed at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne. Stay tuned for this module.

If you haven't registered yet, join us and our community now and get the latest in stroke resources and learning.

2016 National Stroke Audit – bigger and better than ever!

The 2016 National Stroke Audit of Rehabilitation Services has been our largest audit yet and will provide a vital snapshot into inpatient stroke rehabilitation across Australia. A total of 3,540 cases were surveyed in this year's audit (up from 3,081 in 2014) from 108 rehabilitation services (up from 103 in 2014). A huge thanks to everyone involved who committed their time and efforts to review and improve stroke rehabilitation care. The analysis is being undertaken currently, with the national report to be released later in the year, followed closely by site reports.

As noted previously, the site reports will mirror the new format utilised in 2015. This includes benchmarking addressing achievable targets, state and national rankings and the ability to compare to services with similar stroke admissions. In addition, based on the evaluation from 2015 audit sites, a new summary document will be provided clearly communicating audit performance.

For any questions about the audit program please contact Patrick Young at audit@strokefoundation.com.au

Meet the 2016 Stroke Care Champion finalists

A huge thank you to everyone who nominated a stroke champion for this year's Stroke Awards. We received a record number of nominations across the five categories this year and it was a tough job deciding the finalists and an even tougher job determining the winner. Dr Mark Mackay, a committed neurologist working in paediatric stroke is the 2016 Stroke Care Champion. A huge congratulations to Mark and all the finalists.

Dr Mark Mackay – Neurologist, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne VIC

Dr Mark MacKay has driven the development of national clinical guidelines on the diagnosis and management of perinatal and childhood stroke. These guidelines will offer Australian children the chance to receive consistent care in Australia's paediatric centres, reducing brain injury and improving survivors' quality of life. He is passionate about improving the quality of care for child stroke patients, improving diagnosis of paediatric stroke and increasing awareness of childhood stroke.

Ms Beverley Macdonald – RN Stroke Liaison Nurse, Campbelltown Hospital NSW

Beverley Macdonald is considered by her peers as the driving force in the Campbelltown Hospital stroke unit. Beverley not only helps patients, but passionately works to educate family and carers. She is seen daily working on the floor assisting nursing staff with patient care.

Associate Professor Dr Martin Jude – Neurologist, Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, Calvary Hospital, Wagga NSW

Dr Martin Jude has worked tirelessly as the sole neurologist in a catchment area of nearly 250,000 people. Dr Jude has a passion for bringing first-class stroke care to rural Australia and does this silently without want for praise.

Brain Waves Program team, Monash Health VIC

Monash Health delivered the Brain Waves project to improve stroke recovery. The team used videos to convey vital information to stroke patients to help them with their recovery. Feedback from participants was highly positive with stroke survivors stating they were able to learn recovery techniques in a social environment.

Ms Carolyn Beltrame, Registered Nurse, La Trobe Regional Hospital VIC

Carolyn Beltrame has worked tirelessly in the field of regional stroke care for six years. She initiated stroke thrombolysis at Latrobe Regional hospital in 2010 and works to educate nursing staff, ambulance service and doctors alike about stroke. Carolyn is conscientious in her practice and strives for gold-standard practice in her profession.

Ms Kaia Leo – Speech Pathologist, Caboolture Hospital QLD

Kaia Leo demonstrates a commitment to clinical excellence on a daily basis, and is always looking for ways to improve whole-of-hospital service delivery to people with stroke. In a unit with no dedicated stroke staff, Kaia has put systems in place to identify patients early as they come in to the Emergency Department, to ensure patients receive the services they need.

Dr Ruth Barker – Associate Professor and researcher, James Cook University Cairns QLD

Dr Ruth Barker has worked tirelessly for over a decade to improve the care of stroke survivors and to optimise their functional recovery after stroke. Ruth is the lead inventor of the SMART Arm, a revolutionary device designed to allow retraining of arm function in stroke survivors.

A game-changer for Darlene and for stroke

When Darlene McLeod collapsed on the kitchen floor, her young daughter thought it was a game. Darlene's husband Don immediately thought 'stroke'. Don's quick thinking meant Darlene was soon in hospital getting thrombolysis treatment.

But the clot wasn't dissolving and the outlook was grim.

Fortunately Darlene's neurologist Stroke Foundation Clinical Council Member Associate Professor Tim Kleinig was part of a research team led by Stroke Foundation Clinical Council Chair, Associate Professor Bruce Campbell. They'd been trialling a new treatment called endovascular clot retrieval in combination with a clot-busting drug. It was Darlene's best chance.

Don had to sign approval to use the new procedure. "Once the doctor said he would do it if the patient were his wife, I knew we had to go for it."

The clot was successfully removed and by the end of the day Darlene was sitting up in bed and even able to say hello to her children.

According to A/Professor Campbell's research, in 89 percent of patients blood flow to the brain was restored using clot removal, compared with 34 percent of patients who had clot-dissolving therapy alone.

With your support, we can continue our ground-breaking stroke research program. Together we can:

- Encourage visionary researchers to work on stroke
- Seed new research that will help prevent stroke and improve quality of life after stroke.

Please share or donate to our appeal to help fund the next game-changer for stroke. Visit www.strokefoundation.com.au



Fight Stroke forum

The Stroke Foundation hosted its first ever election forum on the Central Coast of New South Wales last month, pictured at right.

The Gosford RSL was jam-packed, and the stroke community of the NSW Central Coast got to ask local candidates what they plan to do to improve local and national stroke treatment and services.

Local stroke survivor Brenda Booth and registered nurse and research fellow from University of Technology Sydney Dr Caleb Ferguson addressed the audience.

Stroke Foundation Chief Executive Officer Sharon McGowan said Gosford was a fitting location for the forum, as the region is one of the areas hardest hit by stroke.

“The election forum highlighted the urgent need for better stroke prevention, treatment and support on the Central Coast and across the country,” Ms McGowan said.

“It was fantastic to hear all politicians acknowledge stroke as a major issue for their electorates and commit to helping address this issue if elected.”

The Stroke Foundation will continue to advocate to the new Government to develop a national coordinated plan to prevent, treat and manage stroke. To join the fight visit www.strokefoundation.com.au/how-you-can-help/fight-stroke

Exciting news for Queensland stroke patients

More Queensland stroke patients will now receive follow up care and referrals to help their recovery with the expansion of the Stroke Foundation's StrokeConnect program. The program will soon be doubling its reach thanks to a \$1.87 million Queensland Government funding boost.

The service now has the potential to reach over 5,000 stroke survivors and carers annually. It will provide a proactive phone follow up service to stroke survivors following their discharge from hospital. It aims to deliver targeted information, advice and support to survivors and their families, ensuring they are able to self-manage their stroke recovery after leaving hospital.

The calls will be made by a multi-disciplinary team of health professionals skilled in the complexities of stroke management and recovery. Over the life of the program we will be working with 25 hospitals in metro, rural and regional areas, with six more to come on board later in the year.

We are currently looking to get more hospitals involved in the program, so if you would like to see the StrokeConnect program as part of your stroke service we encourage you to submit an expression of interest via the Stroke Foundation website.

Find out more about the StrokeConnect program by visiting www.strokefoundation.com.au/followup



Get smart: Registrations for Smart Strokes 2016 open now

SMART STROKES 2016 Conference is coming to the capital, and will be held at the National Convention Centre, Canberra from 25–26 August 2016. SMART STROKES aims to improve the clinical care and management of stroke and collaborates with renowned international presenters together with national experts to produce an unforgettable and valuable conference. This year includes an interactive and dynamic conference program, with eight distinguished keynote speakers and over 59 individual abstract presentations. The Stroke Foundation will be there too, providing information on the latest support and services we deliver for health professionals working in stroke.

To find out more visit www.smartstrokes.com.au or register now <https://tas.currinda.com/event/1326>

AuSDaT makes data entry easy

The Australian Stroke Data Tool (AuSDaT) has proven to be a big success, making the 2016 Rehabilitation Audit easy to enter. The tool has been successfully utilised for the audit by importing existing data from the Australian Rehabilitation Outcomes Registry saving time and data entry. After lots of planning and effort, the tool will now enable easy data entry from the Australian Stroke Clinical Registry.

With the support of Queensland and Victorian Governments, further work has been undertaken to create an Application Programming Interface which will enable data linkages to be automated between individual hospital databases or other programs such as the INSPIRE database to the AuSDaT. There is also a pilot research project underway using the AuSDaT to track pathways of care through rehabilitation services in Queensland and it is hoped further opportunities for other programs and states will become a reality in the near future. For any questions relating to the AuSDaT please contact Kelvin Hill at audit@strokefoundation.com.au

Stroke Foundation research grants now open

The Stroke Foundation is looking to spark the next big innovation in stroke through our research grants program which has just opened. Each year the Stroke Foundation offers a range of grants including Small Project Grants, Seed Grants and Future Leader Grants.

We are encouraging researchers to submit their applications for Small Project Grants and Seed Grants in the following categories:

- Improving the transition of patients out of the acute setting and improving long term follow up and support.
- Bladder and bowel management.
- Recognition and management of fatigue.
- Improving the delivery of high quality stroke care.
- Technology related rehabilitation activity.
- Carer support.

Building on the above, the Future Leader Grants aim to nurture up-and-coming researchers. These grants support early to mid-career researchers by enabling travel, leadership training and formal mentoring.

For more information about our grants program go to www.strokefoundation.com.au or email us at research@strokefoundation.com.au

Expert voices join stroke survivors in podcast

With three episodes of stroke recovery information and advice released so far, the *enableme* podcast has established a strong following among stroke survivors. Featuring leading experts such as Professor John Olver, Director of Medical Rehabilitation at the Epworth, the podcast has plenty to offer health professionals too.

Podcast episodes include:

- **The science of neuroplasticity** and what rewiring the brain means for stroke rehabilitation. Physiotherapy lecturer Dr Michelle McDonnell from the University of South Australia talks about how meaningful goals and activities deliver practical benefit for brain recovery.
- **Fear of another stroke** – we spoke to general practitioner and author Dr Bill Williams about his experience with secondary prevention.
- **Post stroke spasticity**— Professor Olver, who was the primary author for the international consensus statement for using botulinum toxin for lower limb disorders in adults, shared his knowledge of the causes and treatment of post stroke spasticity. He stressed that physical therapies are the important first resort, with medical interventions used to help natural recovery.

Listen to all these stories and advice from health professionals, stroke survivors and researchers at www.enableme.org.au/podcasts

Guidelines update – full steam ahead

The *Clinical Guidelines for Stroke Management* update continues to move forward with working group experts in the process of reading and extracting data from new literature selected. Excitingly, the actual recommendations are also now being updated. Public consultation is planned for later in the year and we look forward to hearing your vital feedback.

For any questions about the update get in touch with Leah Wright at guidelines@strokefoundation.com.au

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Visit www.InformMe.org.au to sign up.**

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www.enableme.org.au – our online tool to aid stroke recovery.

www.informme.org.au – our online tool to assist health professionals.

Key dates

Stroke Foundation research grants program open: 4 July 2016

Asia Pacific Stroke Conference: 14-17 July 2016

Smart Strokes Conference: 25-26 August 2016

5th APAC Forum: 12–14 September 2016

National Stroke Week: 12–18 September 2016

Recovery after stroke: latest research from the Florey: 5 October 2016

ADMA 12th Annual National Conference: 20–21 October 2016