

Major cholesterol study in Western Australia leads the way

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Researchers at The University of Notre Dame’s School of Medicine are undertaking a three-year study into the early intervention and treatment of an inherited high cholesterol disease, a condition that often goes undiagnosed with devastating effects.

The study will assist in developing strategies to provide better care for people suffering from this condition and contribute positively to improving the long-term health of families.

Notre Dame’s Pro Vice Chancellor Research, Professor Greg Blatch said more than 45,000 Australians – including 5000 West Australians – suffer from the condition, called familial hypercholesterolemia (FH).

“This condition which causes very high cholesterol levels from birth into adult life, failure to diagnose and treat the disease can lead to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, specifically coronary artery disease, at an early age.

“Until recently, FH has been managed mainly through hospital clinics with the majority under-treated despite effective remedies being available,” Professor Blatch said.

WA Primary Health Alliance general manager, Chris Kane, said the organisation was pleased to be supporting the implementation of the model of care that will be used during the study.

“Identifying how the new pathway for the detection and management of FH will fit into the overall health service is an important focus of the study.

“I look forward to seeing how the proposed model of care for this particular disease will be sustainable within the primary care setting,” Ms Kane said.

The study will be undertaken in 17 general practices in Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania and will not only investigate ways to improve the early diagnosis of FH to prevent long-term cardiovascular disease, but also develop improved, cost-effective strategies to provide better care to patients and families.

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About WAPHA: WAPHA oversees the strategic commissioning functions of the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The WA PHNs are three of 31 PHNs established by the Australian Government nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for the community. We work across the WA healthcare system with doctors, allied health professionals, Area Health Services and service providers to improve the coordination of care for people who are at risk of poor health outcomes. For more information, visit www.wapha.org.au visit www.wapha.org.au