

Date:

27 November 2002

Subject

NIB supporting diabetes research

In line with NIB's ongoing commitment to supporting health education and medical research we are proud to be involved with a Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) project that will help eliminate a major health risk for diabetes sufferers.

Strokes affect approximately 40,000 Australians each year. People with diabetes, either previously diagnosed or newly diagnosed at the time of stroke, comprise around 30% of all patients presenting with acute stroke.

Evidence also suggests that the propensity for mortality and disability from stroke is increased in people with diabetes, however, the strength of this effect is uncertain.

NIB is supporting HMRI researchers based at the Neurology and Endocrinology Departments of John Hunter Hospital to examine the links between diabetes and stroke.

Specifically, researchers will investigate the relationship between blood sugar levels during the first 48 hours from the onset of a stroke and the longer-term outcomes; particularly the level of disability and handicap.

Thirty-two patients have been entered into the study over the past 12 months and have completed their three-month follow-up assessments, however larger patient numbers will be required to more thoroughly examine the association between blood sugar levels and stroke outcome.

Goals related to data collection, blood glucose measurement and the use of disability scales in outcome assessment have been accomplished.

NIB's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Mark Fitzgibbon, is delighted that NIB has the opportunity to be involved in initiatives that have the potential to deliver benefits for our members and the wider community.

"500,000 Australians suffer from diabetes and the condition is now a priority listing in the nation's health care system," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

"NIB is a foundation member of the HMRI and we share their dedication towards medical research that delivers long term health benefits for all Australians.

"The more we know about diabetes the better equipped we will be to arrest this disturbing health trend. HMRI's research will provide us with some much needed answers and their program has NIB's total support."

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