



MEDIA RELEASE

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DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

May 17 is World Hypertension Day (WHD) and it is a good time to remember to check your blood pressure. People with high blood pressure may not have symptoms and the first sign that something is amiss, if your high blood pressure is not managed, may be when you suffer a stroke or a heart attack that can leave you severely disabled if not dead.

High blood pressure (hypertension) means that your blood is pumping at a higher pressure than normal through your arteries. This can contribute to a number of diseases including heart attack, kidney failure or stroke.

High blood pressure affects about one-third of our population. Many don't know they have it, some are managed well with medicines while about 25 per cent don't have the condition under control. High blood pressure is the single biggest contributor to death from a heart attack or stroke.

WHD 2012 and the promotion of *Healthy Lifestyle – Healthy Blood Pressure* is a global movement urging people to reflect on the amount of exercise they do, their smoking habits, diet, and how much alcohol they consume. These are all strong contributing factors to how healthy or unhealthy we are.

Some people have inherited high blood pressure i.e. they may have genes which makes them prone to hypertension, and these individuals need to monitor their blood pressure levels closely. It is even more important for this group to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

“Australian scientists and clinicians have made strong international advances in blood pressure research. Two particular initiatives are the recognition of the usefulness of Ambulatory Blood Pressure monitoring and secondly, very recent advances in the treatment of high blood pressure for people with chronic kidney disease by a treatment known as renal denervation,” said Professor Jaye Chin-Dusting, President of the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia.

[Ambulatory Blood Pressure](#) (ABP) monitoring has been available for some time but has not been in common usage. It is broadly acknowledged as being the best way to monitor blood pressure and is found to have more accurate and reliable results. Australian experts are now advocating it should be used for patients at risk, which is in line with the latest British guidelines (NICE guidelines).

ABP involves wearing a portable BP device for about 24 hours. It measures your BP (every 15–30min during the day and every 30–60min overnight) automatically via a cuff worn on the upper arm. The readings provide an assessment of the BP during normal daytime activities and importantly during sleep. The measurements are then downloaded to a computer, and a report calculates the number of readings and the amount of time readings are above the hypertension threshold. The information can also be used to calculate a range of signs associated with cardio-vascular risk.

Australian guidelines on the use of ABP in general practice have been developed by the Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring Working Group which is a subcommittee of the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia (HBPRCA), National Heart Foundation of Australia (NHF) and the National Blood Pressure and Vascular Disease Advisory Committee. It also has been endorsed by both parent groups together with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

Renal denervation is also making strong inroads into managing high blood pressure. While its' effectiveness has first been established in patients with hypertension that was not controllable with medication, there is now also first evidence that this procedure is safe and helpful to be used in patients with chronic kidney disease.

Blood pressure in these patients often remains uncontrolled and contributes to further deterioration of kidney function. Renal denervation treatment involves the use of radio waves delivered via a small wire inserted into the kidney arteries to disrupt the nerves in the kidneys that cause high blood pressure.

These recent advances by Professor Markus Schlaich, a member of the HBPRCA Executive Committee and his team from the Baker IDI Heart & Diabetes Institute will be published online on World Hypertension Day in the prestigious *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* (JASN).

The High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia (HBPRCA) is a dynamic group whose national and international members are at the forefront of the blood pressure world. They have been leaders of research into the causes, prevention and treatment of high blood pressure since 1979 and research incorporates the full range from experimental molecular biology and genetics to human physiology and drug treatment of hypertension.

Council is delighted to be hosting Hypertension Sydney 2012, the biennial Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Hypertension in Sydney from 30 September – 4 October 2012.

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