



Acting Fast to Increase Time-Critical Stroke Treatments for all South Australians

What is the challenge?

One in six South Australians will have a stroke in their lifetime. Stroke kills more people than breast or prostate cancer. Of those who survive, the majority will live with permanent disability – there are as many people living with the effects of stroke as there are living with dementia. So this is a major challenge for individuals, their family, health services and society. Recent trials have shown that treatments to drastically reduce the impact of stroke are time-critical – delivery within 4 to 6 hours is best practice and can save lives as well as drastically reduce disability post-stroke – very recent research has also shown some benefit may persist for up to 24 hours. However our health services are centred in busy metropolitan areas and require highly specialised staff and equipment. Therefore, we must design and implement different health systems to deliver these treatments as fast as possible, to all who may benefit. This imperative for fast, specialised management has been achieved in metropolitan Adelaide – recent data confirms Adelaide is now achieving some of the best treatment rates in Australia. But there are 1000 people sustaining a stroke each year in rural and remote areas of SA who don't have ready access to these services. Our rural and remote citizens, including many Aboriginal people who live disproportionately in non-metro areas and experience more severe strokes at younger ages, all need equitable access to these life-saving, disability-reducing treatments.

About this research translation project

We plan to implement and evaluate a suite of system-wide stroke care improvements to reduce the geographic disparities. This will include collecting comprehensive data on all people in rural and remote SA who experience a stroke. This will match the data we currently collect in metro Adelaide. We will train ambulance officers to recognise those people who will most



benefit from new treatments so they can be prioritised to be directed to this care at the right time and place. Finally, we will increase the number of regional centres who can deliver special stroke treatments – we will train staff and link these with tele-stroke support from the Royal Adelaide Hospital. We will continue to monitor the impact of these reforms using a custom-built data platform. We have a strong team of researchers, clinicians and engaged stroke survivors and carers in metro and rural SA who all bring vital knowledge and skills for this project.

What will be the impact?

In SA around 1000 people in rural and remote areas experience a stroke every year. Many do not receive best practice care. We hope to reduce the number of country people dying from stroke and to improve the independence and quality of life of those who survive. Our aim is to deliver the right services at the right time and place for every South Australian.

Project contact details

Project Title Acting Fast to Increase Time-Critical Stroke Treatments for all South Australians

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