

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM HEART CARE PARTNERS

Heart Care Partners would like to take the opportunity to wish you all a safe and joyous holiday time with your family and friends.

HCP have a lot to be thankful for this year, we have again extended our services at Greenslopes Private Hospital with the addition of two new doctors, Dr Julie Humphries and Dr Gerard Connors. We have proudly watched as our current doctors have extended services to new areas such as the Sunshine Coast and we have extended our interventional services with percutaneous closure of paravalvar leaks and left atrial appendage closure, using the Watchman device. We have moved our testing service during the Wesley Hospital

renovations and have been involved in many facets of Echocardiography, Clinical Trials, research and developments within the field of cardiology both nationally and internationally.

We have upgraded our services to you through our GP surveys. We now send reports electronically - both faster and simpler. We have created new staff positions, are in the process of setting up a new digital, internet based, telephone system, and have extended our Medical Liaison Positions.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support throughout the year while we strive to be the benchmark in cardiac care.

We will be here to see your patients over the Xmas and New Year Holidays, and we have included our clinic times in this newsletter for your convenience.

If you need our help over the holiday period we will be available.

Dr Stephen Cox
Chairman of the Clinical Management Committee
Heart Care Partners

Moira McInerney
General Manager
Heart Care Partners



NEW CLINIC OPENING AT THE WESLEY HOSPITAL

HCP moved into their new clinic within the Wesley on the 7th of November.

This clinic is in line with the Wesley Hospital refurbishment and gives us greater flexibility with testing.

Please tell your patients we are now on the ground floor of the Wesley Hospital (level 2) opposite the lifts.



HEART CARE PARTNERS CHRISTMAS OPEN TIMES

Heart Care Partners work throughout the Xmas and New Year period to ensure that your patients are seen, please note our clinic times, and remember that if you need a patient seen urgently, we will ensure that we see them.

Just call the bookings number on **3858 8690** and if you need to speak to a Cardiologist phone **3858 8699** (Wesley Doctors) or **3858 8689** (Southside).

	December									January					
	21	22	23	24	25	28	29	30	31	1	4	5	6	7	8
	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
Sanford Jackson	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wesley testing	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greenslopes	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mount Ommaney	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			✓				✓
Clayfield	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓				✓



HEART CARE PARTNERS CARDIOLOGY CONNECTIONS

is on again on the weekend of the
20th - 21st March 2010 at
The Hyatt Regency Coolum.

Invitations will be in the mail shortly

NEW STROKE PREVENTION IN ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

“Watchman” Left Atrial Appendage Occluder Implants: New Stroke Prevention in Atrial Fibrillation

In August this year a major study was completed and published in The Lancet that showed that a new plug device designed to seal off the opening of the left atrial appendage as equivalent (and perhaps superior) to long term warfarin treatment for preventing strokes in patients with atrial fibrillation (Lancet 2009;374:534-42). Last week our own Heart Care Partners Cardiologist Dr Karen Phillips was one of the first doctors in Australia to perform the new procedure at Greenslopes Private Hospital. The ingenious plug nicknamed “the Watchman” is implanted into the heart via a catheterisation procedure from the groin, under a general anaesthetic.



Background

Around one quarter of all strokes are caused by atrial fibrillation (AF). Unlike the other major causes of ischaemic stroke (due to atherosclerotic and hypertensive arterial pathology) with AF blood clots may form directly inside the heart due to stasis and stagnation of flow before potentially embolizing to the brain. The left atrial appendage is the source of over 90% of these clots, presumably because its shape, as a blind-ending pocket creates the ideal conditions for thrombus formation. While antiplatelet agents such as aspirin help reduce the risk of stroke in AF, warfarin provides superior protection for patients at higher risk because of the mechanism of clot formation. The search has long been underway for alternative options to warfarin as both patients and doctors acknowledge its many limitations. Some of our patients will be harmed rather than protected by warfarin with major internal bleeding and even haemorrhagic strokes.

It has long been appreciated that the risk of stroke for patients with AF can be reduced if the left atrial appendage is excised completely during open heart surgery. The theory that the appendage could be “plugged” off via a simple catheterisation procedure has now been tested and shown not only to be possible but also to be very effective for preventing stroke.

Who might benefit?

The PROTECT AF study which compared the Watchman implant to standard warfarin treatment looked at patients with “non-valvular” AF – patients with rheumatic mitral valve disease are recognised as being in a very elevated risk category for stroke. Patients had at least one or more risk factors for stroke according to the CHADS2 score (Congestive heart failure or EF<35% = 1, Hypertension = 1, Age >75 years = 1, Diabetes =1, Prior Stroke or TIA = 2). The patients ranged in age from 41 through to 95 years old. The implant could be successfully performed in around 90% of patients because some variations in the anatomy of the left atrial appendage may be unsuitable for achieving a complete seal with the plug device. In the majority of cases this can be determined from imaging studies (CT scan and transoesophageal echo) prior to the procedure. All patients who received the Watchman implant were required to take warfarin until at least 6 weeks after the procedure. To this point patients completely contraindicated for warfarin therapy have not been evaluated with the implant.

What are the risks?

While the best technique for performing this new procedure is developed, a “learning curve” highlights potential risks for patients. With special training in the procedure, complication rates are expected to be around 1-2% and include stroke during the procedure and pericardial tamponade.

How can patients access this new treatment?

The Watchman device is in the final stages of full approval by the TGA for general use in Australia, which is expected in early 2010. Cardiologists will require special training to be able to perform these procedures. It is expected that over the coming 1 to 2 years there will be sufficient

skilled Cardiologists in Queensland to make the Watchman implant procedure generally available to patients in public and private hospitals. Heart Care Partners will continue to be at the forefront of this and many other interventional cardiac procedures.



New Medical Liaison Officer Brad Ward

I'm delighted to be representing Heart Care Partners and I look forward to meeting you all soon.

My primary role will be to assist in growing the organisation through liaison with key stakeholders, general practitioners and key industry partners.

I join Heart Care Partners with more than 20 years of sales, marketing, and management experience with some of the world's leading health care companies, including most recently, 12 years with Johnson & Johnson Medical - Interventional Cardiology Division (Cordis) and Neurosurgical Division (Codman).