



MEDIA RELEASE

14th September 2009

STROKE WEEK RAISES IMPORTANCE OF STROKE PREVENTION

Barwon Health today received a cheque from Medimime Productions for \$12,000.

Medimime stages productions every year to raise money for services across Barwon Health. This year's efforts were towards stroke services across Barwon Health.

This week is National Stroke Week and 65 year old Basil Vassiliau appreciates the value of a \$12,000 donation to stroke services.

Basil wasn't sure what was happening to him when he felt dizzy and disoriented eight weeks ago.

It wasn't until he fell out of bed and discovered that his right side wasn't working that he thought he might have had a stroke.

"I called the ambulance and was taken into hospital," Basil said.

"I felt like I was slowing down, but I wasn't sure I had a stroke. I got up and felt pretty dizzy then lost my balance."

"After spending a week in hospital, and two weeks at the McKellar Centre, I am 90% better. I have had Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy to learn how to keep my balance when I'm walking."

Professor Peter Gates from the Neuroscience Department at Barwon Health said there is an increased risk of stroke as we get older.

"There is also an increased risk if someone else in the family has had a stroke," Prof Gates said.

"There are a number of medical problems that can be treated and lifestyle choices you can make that significantly influence the risk of developing a stroke."

The most important risk factors for stroke are untreated hypertension and smoking. The hazards of smoking are well advertised but not everyone is aware of the fact that the risk of stroke is also increased with smoking.

"Unfortunately many people, particularly men, do not visit doctors on a regular basis and are not aware of the fact that they have high blood pressure," Prof Gates explained.

"Excess weight, high cholesterol and an inactive lifestyle also increases the risk of developing a stroke."

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