



Department of Health
Government of Western Australia



Royal Perth Hospital

Media Statement

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New way to assess heart problems will save lives

A new way of assessing patients who arrive at the Royal Perth Hospital Emergency Department with chest pain could help save lives.

Patients that present to the ED complaining of chest pain will now be assessed using a newly developed tool, that will see nurses and doctors working together to diagnose and look after the patients.

Emergency Department Consultant Dr Peter Leman said having a dedicated pathway to assess patients would improve the treatment of the 500 patients that come to hospital complaining of chest pain every month.

Dr Leman said this new assessment tool, the chest pain protocol, would help save lives.

“This means everyone having chest pain will get immediate attention – whether that pain is severe or fleeting or even if the pain has passed,” he said.

Using the protocol advanced practice nurses may assess someone with chest pain first, potentially avoiding the waiting time to see a doctor to ensure that serious and life threatening conditions are detected earlier.

Dr Leman said the protocol enables the ED team to be very thorough in assessing what the source of the chest pain is, whether it is a heart attack, a tear in an artery, or something less serious”

“Using the chest pain protocol, the clinician can make a sound decision about how to treat the individual. Our aim is to give 100 per cent of patients the best model of care.”

The AMI 100 initiative has come about through the Department of Health's Safety and Quality Investment for Reform (SQuIRe) initiative.

As part of SQuIRe, \$24 million is being invested across WA to make changes to clinical practice over the next three years.

The team was established with input from clinical experts from Cardiology, Internal Medicine and the Emergency Department, who evaluated the most appropriate way of ensuring best practice.

According to the Heart Foundation, heart disease is the leading cause of death in Australia, accounting for 36 per cent of all deaths in 2004.