

Under the Microscope

With Doctor Ashley Irish

Improving the lives of dialysis patients is the aim of a major research project headed by Royal Perth Hospital.

RPH Nephrology Consultant Dr Ashley Irish and colleagues received a grant of almost \$1.8m for a randomised controlled clinical trial to investigate the role of aspirin and fish-oil in preventing fistula thrombosis, or blood clotting.

The National Health and Medical Research Council grant will cover a national trial that takes in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.



Chief investigator Dr Irish said the trial team was a consortium that represents the Australian Kidney Trial Network (AKTN).

“We want to determine whether aspirin and/or fish oil effectively reduces the risk of early thrombosis (blood clotting) in arterio-venous fistulae (AVF), when compared with a placebo,” he said.

Dr Ashley Irish who is heading the trial.

“We think that around 20-30 per cent of AVF’s fail and then surgery has to take place. Our aim is to reduce that number by 30 per cent and that is being conservative based on some earlier studies.

“If the vascular access can be maintained that means less people will need to go into theatre.”

Dr Irish said maintaining a functioning AVF would reduce the costs to the health system as well as help patients.

“The artificial vascular access are more susceptible to failure and complications such as infection and death,” he said.

“There is a slow rate of failure with AVF but it is by far and away the best means for dialysis.”

Dr Irish said trial volunteers would be given either fish oil tablets or aspirin, some would receive both and others would take a placebo 90 days before having surgery to create an AVF. These people would then be followed up to measure what effect these agents had on their fistula. The trial will start in July or August and continue for the next three years.