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## **New guidelines on treatment of stroke**

New guidelines on the treatment of stroke have been released by the National Stroke Foundation.

The guidelines provide a series of evidence-based recommendations to promote improved treatment for stroke and Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA).

The new *Clinical Guidelines for Acute Stroke Management* are an update from the version produced in 2003 and have been expanded to include recommendations for treatment and assessment of TIA or 'mini stroke' and evidence for the cost effectiveness of the treatments recommended.

"Recent research shows that the risk of stroke after a TIA is very high - much higher than we previously thought", Dr Erin Lalor, CEO of the National Stroke Foundation said.

"The research also shows that fast assessment and treatment after TIA greatly reduces the risk of a subsequent stroke - a powerful prevention strategy", Dr Lalor said.

The guidelines have recommendations about early assessment and treatment for TIA that uses a simple score called the ABCD score to identify those at greatest risk and initiate immediate treatment.

"The recent national survey of stroke care in Australia by the National Stroke Foundation, however, found that few hospitals provided clinics for rapid assessment and treatment of TIA as recommended in the guidelines. The number of these clinics has fallen since 2004, which is a great cause for concern," Dr Lalor said.

"Assessment of TIA depends on immediate recognition of the signs of stroke. So it is important that everyone is aware of how to recognise the signs of stroke and seek treatment. The guidelines support doctors in making decisions about how to treat them," Dr Lalor said.

The guidelines also include a consumer rating, identifying aspects of care considered to be vital from a patient perspective.

Development of the guidelines was undertaken by a multidisciplinary Expert Working Group using methodology consistent with National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) standards.

The guidelines were released at the Stroke Society of Australasia annual meeting in Perth.

**For more information or for interviews contact Nicola Edwards on 03 9670 1000**