



14 September 2009

## National Stroke Week 14-20 September 2009 New FAST Campaign to save more lives

Research has found 70 per cent of stroke patients and 46 per cent of bystanders did not recognise stroke at the onset of symptoms, and 85 per cent did not call an ambulance immediately, risking death or severe disability from stroke.

“Early assessment in hospital is critical,” said National Stroke Foundation Medical Director Professor Chris Bladin who was involved in the research. “There are effective treatments for stroke including the clot busting drug tPA, anticoagulants and surgery but the time window available to prevent brain death is extremely short”.

**Over a quarter of research participants chose to ignore or monitor symptoms and half did not arrive at hospital until five and a half hours after the onset of symptoms.**

This is alarming according to the National Stroke Foundation due to how quickly the brain cells die in the part of the brain affected by the stroke (1.9 million neurons every minute). Professor of Neurology at the University of California, Jeffery Saver calculated a piece of the brain the size of a pea dies every 12 minutes unless quick treatment is given, as published in *Stroke*.

To help all Australians recognise the signs of stroke and call 000 (triple zero) straight away, the National Stroke Foundation unveiled a new look FAST campaign which now includes pictures showing how the signs may appear.

The Stroke Foundation believes the new campaign will help people of all ages and abilities including children, older people, stroke survivors and people with literacy issues and intellectual disabilities to remember the signs of stroke and the FAST test.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, Lara Giddings MP congratulated the National Stroke Foundation on the campaign. “The new campaign will assist Tasmanians of all ages and backgrounds to recognise the signs of stroke and call for medical help”.

**F.A.S.T.** stands for **Face, Arms, Speech and Time**. The **FAST** test involves asking three simple questions:

- **Face** – Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?
- **Arms** – Can they lift both arms?
- **Speech** – Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?
- **Time** – Time is critical. If you see any of these signs call **000** immediately.

“Stroke does not discriminate. It can happen at anytime to anyone regardless of age, race or background,” said Connie Digolis, State Manager for the National Stroke Foundation. “Our new campaign doesn’t discriminate either. Adding the images removes language barriers and empowers everyone in the community to save a life from stroke”.

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES:** Connie Digolis 0418 431 995