

Precision blood pressure measurement to improve heart health

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A University of Queensland researcher is trialling new, cutting-edge technology for measuring blood pressure and the health of the heart. The study, led by Dr James Sharman from the School of Medicine, aims to determine the effectiveness of measuring central blood pressure. This will help guide treatment management decisions of patients with high blood pressure (hypertension), a condition that affects nearly 30 per cent of the Australian population.

"We are very excited about this study as it could provide the framework for a better way to treat hypertension. It has been designed to ensure that all people enrolled receive optimal care," Dr Sharman said.

Dr Sharman said it was now well recognised that traditional measures of blood pressure, using a cuff around the upper arm, did not provide a complete understanding of the true pressures that could be experienced by the heart and other vital organs. This deficit could have major implications for the appropriate diagnosis and treatment of people with hypertension. The new technology involves a quick, non-invasive test that measures central blood pressure by recording the pulse at the wrist.

"We also give each person advice on the best way to work with their usual doctor to ensure continued benefit after the trial has finished. We feel that this study truly represents a win-win situation for the patient and their doctor," Dr Sharman said. Men and women aged between 18 and 75 years, who have been diagnosed with hypertension and are taking at least 1, but no more than 3, medications for hypertension are invited

to participate.

The study is over 12 months and participants will be asked to visit the Princess Alexandra Hospital every 3 months. Each participant will receive a comprehensive scan of the structure and function of their heart.

Blood pressure will be monitored by doctors who specialise in hypertension. Participants (and their doctors) will receive all clinical information.

Source: University of Queensland

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