

MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Board and Private Health and Research Foundations join forces to improve outcomes in Acute Care Delivery

The Canterbury Medical Research Foundation, The Emergency Care Foundation and the Canterbury District Health Board have put their collective might behind a new Senior Research Fellowship in Acute Care based at Christchurch Hospital.

The five-year fellowship will improve the quality of Acute and Emergency Care delivery at the hospital through targeted research and close collaboration with clinicians eager to see positive research outcomes translated into real-world clinical practice and, importantly, into improved patient outcomes.

The demand on acute services is large, around 140,000 patient visits a year across the health system. The challenge is to quickly, accurately and safely assess a patient's condition and to ensure they access the services they need and don't unnecessarily access the services they don't need. The first projects this Fellowship supports will better identify which patients presenting to the emergency department with chest pain need admission and intensive monitoring, and who can be safely discharged home.

The Fellowship will be undertaken by Associate Professor John Pickering. Dr Pickering's research has been cross-disciplinary. This began with the application of physics in dermatology and plastic surgery through the use of lasers in medicine, in particular he helped develop the use of lasers to remove birthmarks. Over the past seven years through he has advanced the diagnostic methods to detect acute kidney injury and most recently, has become involved in research to discover and translate into clinical practice, diagnostic protocols in the emergency department, particularly for patients presenting with chest pain and the possibility of a heart attack.

Dr Pickering sees medical science as a team effort involving, not only doctors, nurses, and scientists, but also the patients themselves, and funders. He is a keen advocate that publically funded research be made known and understandable to a lay audience through blogs and social media. He writes a blog on the Sciblogs.co.nz web site as "Kidney-punch."

The Canterbury Medical Research Foundation and Emergency Care Foundation are delighted to be partnering with the DHB on a project that is likely to have long term effects on the delivery of acute care in the Canterbury Health system and further afield.

"This type of directly translational research that will give us definite and measureable improvements in patient care is something we are particularly interested in. Committing to five years will allow enough time for research findings to be properly utilized in improvement in practice patterns in real life clinical situations and that is very exciting." Says Kate Russell, Chief Executive of the Foundation

“I believe that this is an excellent collaborative project to better integrate medical research with clinical care delivery. This initiative will actively facilitate the alignment of some excellent medical research that is taking place in Christchurch with the Canterbury District Health Board’s priorities and plans for improving care for patients with suspected acute, and particularly cardiovascular, illness” said Dr Martin Than, Emergency Care Foundation

For Canterbury DHB it represents an exciting era of partnering with private trusts and foundations to make inroads into issues of quality improvement and better outcomes for Canterbury people.

“We have already made significant progress in reducing acute demand on our hospitals, with more than 28,911 people receiving treatment and care in the community in the past year. This research will provide important evidence to support future decision-making about how, where and which services are funded and provided to ensure Canterbury people receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place, by the right person.” Said Carolyn Gullery, General Manager of Planning and Funding at the DHB.

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