



MEDIA RELEASE

SRTF groundwork making headway on Stroke Recovery

More than four years of advocating for the Perispinal Etanercept treatment – we are very excited to say momentum is really picking up, with Australian government support.

The Stroke Recovery Trial Fund (SRTF) and PSEAG members have seen first-hand the improvements PSE can bring, with a loved one having had the treatment in America. Since then they've been advocating for its rollout here – including meeting with the Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt and other politicians, hosting public information sessions and fundraising.

SRTF Managing Director Dr Coralie Graham welcomes the interest and support in the PSE potential.

She says currently no approved medical treatment exists in Australia for people who've suffered brain injury - including stroke.

“PSE treats the neuroinflammation that occurs post-stroke. PSE differs from emergency care for acute stroke,” she said.

“The injuries cost the victims, and their families their ongoing health, lifestyle and employment.”

“PSE has the potential to reduce the personal toll on those affected, including family members – as improvements in symptoms can allow them to reduce care, and even the ability to return to gainful employment.”

“It also has the potential to save Governments, both Federal and State millions – in both health care and pensions.”

Etanercept is an approved treatment from the TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration) – and in Australia is subsidised on the PBS (Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme). Given by subcutaneous injection – won't reach the brain

“The molecule of etanercept is 250 times larger than blood brain barrier allows through – PSE injected into a group of blood vessels area near – but not into the spine. Straight after injection the patient is tilted, head down, which starts to reduce neuroinflammation immediately – even many years post stroke or brain injury,” Dr Graham said.

Her son Joel Shepherd had the treatment in America in August 2014, more than 20 years following a brain injury at the age of 3. He had dramatic improvements in speech , communication, memory, mobility, and experiences less seizures and choking episodes, improved swallowing and is generally happier and healthier.

It has greatly improved his life and independence, and that's improved the stress and demands on Coralie.

Dr Graham says published observational studies show 80% of patients have clinically significant improvements following this treatment– but need independent clinical trials.

“In the 3 years since the SRTF has been formed, we have raised just over \$150,000 which will fund Phase 1 of the Griffith University’s School of Medical Science Perispinal Etanercept Clinical Trial for Stroke which is currently underway,” she said.

“This clinical trial is the first of its type anywhere in the world.”

The news of today’s announcement from the Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt and his staff, following several meetings with Dr Graham across the last 12 months.

“It is exciting recognition of the ongoing proactive work in this area by the SRTF and also the amazing life changing potential this could have for hundreds of thousands of people who suffer stroke every year,” she said.

“The increasing momentum around this treatment can only be good and help expedite the research, and in turn the rollout of this treatment to the millions of people that need it.”

To make a tax deductible donation and for more information about the Stroke Recovery Trial Fund go to the website <http://strokerecoverytrialfund.org/>

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ABOUT SRTF – The Stroke Recovery Trial Fund LTD is an independent registered Health Promotion Charity, raising awareness of stroke and brain injury prevention and supporting research aiming to improve the lives of people that have suffered from Stroke and Brain Injury. Initially the charity is fundraising for a randomised controlled clinical trial at Griffith University’s School of Medicine.

NOTE –

To find out more about the clinical trial please have a look at the research website: <https://www2.griffith.edu.au/menzies-health-institute-queensland/our-research/clinical-trials/stroke>

This treatment is currently only available in the USA at the Institute of Neurological Recovery: <http://www.strokebreakthrough.com/>