



MEDIA RELEASE



2 February 2017

Study of carers of people with heart failure

Carers Australia has teamed up with Heart Support-Australia to participate in a four nation study of carers of people with heart failure, to determine the impact on family and friend carers and better targeted related support services.

“This month, the International Alliance of Carer Organizations (IACO) will initiate the Novartis-funded study in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States,” Carers Australia CEO, Ara Cresswell announced today.

“We are very pleased to be involved in this landmark multi-national study and we hope that unpaid carers of people with heart failure in Australia can spare 10 minutes to fill out the online questionnaire so we can learn more about how caring affects your health, finances, employment and social life, and your experiences with health care providers.”

For the purpose of this survey, heart failure is a clinical syndrome in which a person may experience symptoms such as breathing difficulties, gathering of fluid in the lower limbs or stomach and extreme lethargy or tiredness. When the heart either fails to pump efficiently or it fails to relax and fill efficiently, this is heart failure.

Heart Support-Australia CEO, Kelli Sadler said “the recent report by Baker IDI Heart & Diabetes Institute, *Change of Heart – Time to End Cardiovascular Complacency*, states that cardiovascular disease now affects more than 3.7 million Australians, accounts for more than 45,000 deaths each year and is Australia’s most costly health condition.

“It also warns there is an alarming increase projected in the number of Australians affected by irregular heartbeat, known as atrial fibrillation, and heart failure. Irregular heartbeat increases the risk of stroke five-fold and the number of Australians affected is projected to increase by 60% over the next 15 years.”

“Those statistics make it clear that now is the time to look at the impact on carers of people with heart failure and what we need to do to help them continue to provide care,” Ms Cresswell said.

The study can be accessed via the IACO website: <http://www.internationalcarers.org/research-study-on-carers%20of-persons-with%20heart-failure/>. Study results will be released at the 7th International Carers Conference (4-6 October) at the Adelaide Convention Centre, South Australia.

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