

Miracle recovery

Coastal woman achieves amazing results in fight back to health



MOBILE: Well-known Devonport woman, Lyn Overton, is now sufficiently recovered to be talking normally and walking aided only by a walking stick.

By Jemma Bavage

DEVONPORT woman Lyn Overton will return home in just a few weeks after a recovery from a blood clot-induced cardiac arrest and stroke that has gone far beyond medical expectations.

Mrs Overton is now talking normally and walking and has spent a night away from hospital with her family.

She is expected to return home to Devonport in late July — three months after the blood clot lodged in her heart and left her clinging tenuously to life.

Asked for an update on his wife yesterday Ken Overton said that apart from limited movement in her right arm, she was back to her old self.

The 47-year-old community-spirited, avid gym goer collapsed in church on April 4 when a blood clot which formed in her leg broken five weeks earlier travelled to her heart.

The clot caused cardiac arrest and then lodged in her lung, causing severe brain damage and causing a stroke.

She was flown to Hobart for emergency neurosurgery and had half her skull removed for four weeks to release the pressure on her brain.

Since then she has been in Calvary Hospital and for the last four weeks St John's Hospital where she has undergone intensive rehabilitative therapy.

"Because of where the (brain) damage is the surgeon said it was very rare to be able to communicate at all but her personality is 100 p.c. and her memory is great," Mr Overton said.

"She's back to enjoying a bit of humour and communicates normally.

"She moved her arm out for the first time yesterday and



CRITICAL CONDITION: Mrs Overton clung to life in hospital following a cardiac arrest and a stroke, caused by a blood clot from a broken leg.

brought it up to her chest."

Mr Overton said she first spoke in a whisper that he and his daughter could barely hear her.

"The first thing she spelt out was 'the surgeon wants to see me walking'," he said.

"After she first got sick there was no movement at all in her right-hand side.

"She started off walking with a frame but now she's able to walk with a stick and she can walk up and down steps with rails."

Mr Overton said the clot began in her broken left leg but its effect was to paralyse her

"She started off trying to walk up one step and now she's onto five steps."

Mr Overton said family and friends' support and encouragement had greatly assisted in Mrs Overton's recovery.

"I realised how helpless we are in situations like this humanly speaking and could only pray and submit to the plan and purpose that God had for Lyn's life whether she lived or died.

"It's a challenge to be thankful in all circumstances, particularly if the outcome is not what we'd like and we don't get what we'd naturally prefer but God has been our source of strength to cope with this circumstance in life and for the peace to accept what has happened."

We are so grateful for the ability of the surgeons, doctors, physiotherapists and medical staff, their hands and dedication are a wonderful gift from God.

- Ken Overton

right side so her broken left leg had to become her good leg.

He said she had been undergoing four hours a day of rehabilitation, including walking practice, weight-bearing exercise, fit ball activities and exercise bike riding.

was in hospital there were 1500 calls to Mr Overton's recorded update on his mobile phone.

"I would also like to say we are so grateful for the ability of the surgeons, doctors, physiotherapists and medical staff, their hands and dedication are a wonderful gift from God."

Admissions up as bed time declines

CANBERRA — Patients are spending less time in hospitals but the number of admissions continues to grow, a new report shows.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), hospital admissions grew by 4 p.c. to 6.7 million in 2002-03, while the total number of patient days in hospital rose 1.5 p.c. to 23.6 million.

However, the average length of hospital stays continued to drop, as day surgery procedures became more popular.

In 2002-03, the average hospital stay was 3.5 days, down from 3.6 in 2001-02 and 3.9 in 1998-99.

At the same time, the number

of day surgery admissions grew in both the public and private sector.

Over the five years from 1998-99, the proportion of admissions that were same-day stays increased from 45 p.c. to 49 p.c. in public hospitals, and from 55 p.c. to 62 p.c. in private hospitals.

Overall admissions in the private sector grew at a faster rate than in public hospitals.

In the past year, the number of public admissions grew 3.1 p.c., while in the private system it rose 5.4 p.c.

Jenny Hargreaves, from the AIHW's Hospitals and Mental Health Services Unit, said admissions and patient days con-

tinued to increase over the past 10 years, particularly for private hospitals.

"Between 1993-94 and 2002-03, hospital admissions increased by about 44 per cent overall," she said.

During that period, public hospital admissions increased by 24 p.c., while in the private sector it rose by 95.1 p.c.

Waiting times in public hospitals increased slightly.

The median waiting time for elective surgery in public hospitals was 28 days in 2002-03, up one day from the previous year, the AIHW said.

One in 25 patients waited more than one year.

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