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New clinical standard to improve care to patients with heart attacks or suspected heart attacks

Thousands of Australians are affected by acute coronary syndromes (heart attacks and suspected heart attacks) every year. Despite well-developed management guidelines, there are regional variations in treatment interventions across Australia.

Improving early, accurate diagnosis and management of acute coronary syndromes is the focus of a new standard for clinical care which was launched today by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission).

Dr Robert Herkes, Clinical Director of the Commission, said the Acute Coronary Syndromes Clinical Care Standard will help to ensure patients receive optimal treatment from the onset of symptoms of a heart attack through to discharge from hospital.

“Prompt assessment and timely treatment are absolutely crucial to maximise a patient’s chance of recovery, and to reduce their risk of a future heart attack. This new Clinical Care Standard defines the treatment and care that patients should receive from the moment of first clinical contact – wherever they are in Australia” said Dr Herkes.

The Acute Coronary Syndromes Clinical Care Standard will guide clinicians and health services to provide high-quality care, and support patients and their carers in understanding treatment options.

This Clinical Care Standard details the care that may be offered to a patient who experiences chest pain or other symptoms that could be a heart attack. Patients can use this information to make informed decisions, in partnership with their doctor.

Ms Mary Barry, Chief Executive Officer of the National Heart Foundation, said “For heart attacks and suspected heart attacks, it’s most important that patients and their carers know what care and treatment options they may be offered and why. This Clinical Care Standard really puts the patient at the centre of care and supports shared decision-making between clinicians, patients and carers.”

The Acute Coronary Syndromes Clinical Care Standard is accompanied by a set of supporting resources to support implementation by health services, including indicators, and fact sheets for both clinicians and patients/carers.

For more details and to download the Acute Coronary Syndromes Clinical Care Standard and resources, visit <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/clinical-care-standards/acute-coronary-syndromes-clinical-care-standard/>

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

The Commission is a government agency that leads and coordinates national improvements in safety and quality in health care across Australia. The Commission aims to support health care professionals, organisations and policy makers who work with patients and carers.

Media inquiries

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