

# CHARLIES' NEWS

## First-in-Australia procedure for Hugo

### Hugo Ceron-Rincon was a healthy 79-year-old: or so he thought.

He was living an active, retired lifestyle in the Perth suburbs, when a couple of months back, he felt a dull pain in his lower back. Hugo assumed he had pulled a muscle.

The pain persisted for a few weeks, and Hugo decided to visit his GP, just to be sure it was a simple muscle strain. It was a doctor's visit that may have saved his life. Once his doctor received results from Hugo's X-ray, things took a serious note very quickly.

Hugo was diagnosed with an enlarged thoracic aorta due to a six-centimetre aneurysm in his abdomen. He had acted just in time. If left untreated, (If left untreated,) the aneurysm may have burst which could have led to him bleeding to death quickly.

Although Hugo had little to no symptoms, the doctors at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital moved quickly to treat him. Following an initial consultation with the Charles Gairdner Vascular Surgery team, he was admitted to hospital and scheduled for surgery within just five days.

Hugo had faith in the specialists at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, and trusted that the procedure would go well.

What Hugo didn't realise at the time was that that he would be

the first Australian to undergo a revolutionary new stent procedure.

Developed in the US, the sophisticated design is a game-changer for stent surgery according to Vascular and Endovascular Surgeon, Dr Joe Hockley.

*Using generic stent designs from the past, the operation would have required more invasive and extensive surgery,*" he explained.



*"The calibre of deployment for the new design is much easier, so in Hugo's case, we simply entered via two small incisions in the groin to depressurize the aneurysm.*

*"Recovery is much quicker and there is very little pain associated with the healing process."*

Made from a woven fabric-covered alloy called nitinol, the stents are extremely flexible, and easier to deploy with a higher degree of accuracy.

They come in a range of lengths and diameters to suit an array of anatomy.

*"So, in the case of smaller torn arteries from a car accident in children or young women for instance, the stents can be deployed with much more precision and much less trauma to the patient,"* Dr Hockley said.

*"Previous stents were significantly larger which meant we'd need make a larger incision through the abdomen to find the widest part of the artery before inserting the stent."*

That the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital team were first in Australia to use this new technology is in keeping with the Hospital's tradition of innovation in surgical procedures.

Hugo presented favourable anatomy and was a relatively straight-forward case for the Australian-first surgery according to Dr Hockley. With the first surgery now complete, and a second successful follow up procedure in March, Hugo says he is feeling perfectly well.

Hugo is immensely grateful to the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital team.

*"I know I was in excellent hands, and the whole team, from the nurses to all the doctors: they were wonderful,"* Hugo said.

*"I trust everyone in the surgical team. They always showed great knowledge, passion and respect and for that, I am very grateful."*



## From Vicki's desk

A huge 'thank you' to our many wonderful supporters who took the time to respond to our 2019 Donor Survey.

The feedback we have received (and are still receiving as we go to print) will help our team to better understand what matters to our supporters. And that's important for two reasons.

Firstly, it gives us critical insights that help inform us about how and what we communicate to our supporters. Secondly, it enables us to reach out to potential new supporters, so that together, we can have an even greater impact on healthcare outcomes for all Western Australians.

It's not too late to share your views. To request a copy of our survey, please phone Tiana on **(08) 6457 2042**.

In the meantime, enjoy reading about how we are putting your generous support to work through world-first medical research that transforms patient care and outcomes at Sir Charles Gairdner and Osborne Park Hospitals.

Warm regards,

Vicki

Vicki Rasmussen  
Executive Director

## Charlies' Champions

### Rottnest Swim Wind Up

In late February four of our Charlies Champions tackled the challenging Rottnest Chanel Swim. The team comprised four determined young girls: Annika Rasmussen, Amy Harrison, Chloe Harrison and Olivia Clarke. After a shaky week leading up to the event due to boat troubles, the young crew got up at the crack of dawn on event day and headed for the beach. They put in an amazing effort and raised more than \$600.

We are so proud of them and thank them for their efforts. ▼



### HBF Run for a Reason ▶

We have just finished up Run for a Reason 2019. We were so lucky to have a wonderful team running for us this year!

We take part in many fitness events over the course of the year, if you'd like to join us on any fundraising adventures please contact us now. We would love your support!

➔ Please phone for more information **6457 2042**.



### Hike 4 Health ▲

On 16 May, two Charlies Champions will participate in the Hike 4 Health. Sally Nyari and Morna Frankowiak have raised more than \$3,500 each in sponsorship: a mammoth effort! We are so excited to see them hike the Great Wall of China and wish them the very best on their trip.

➔ Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates.



## How Charlies Foundation is changing lives

### Jason's trial to abstinence

Jason O'Donnell is the first to admit he is suffering the aftermath of poor lifestyle choices.

For too long, alcohol was a big part of his life and he was recently diagnosed with liver cirrhosis.

He has his 7-year-old son, Connor, to thank for alerting him to his possible health issues.

"I didn't think there was anything wrong at the time," he says, "but just before Christmas last year, my son asked me why I was 'all yellow'. I just thought I looked fine, but he told me my eyes were yellow."

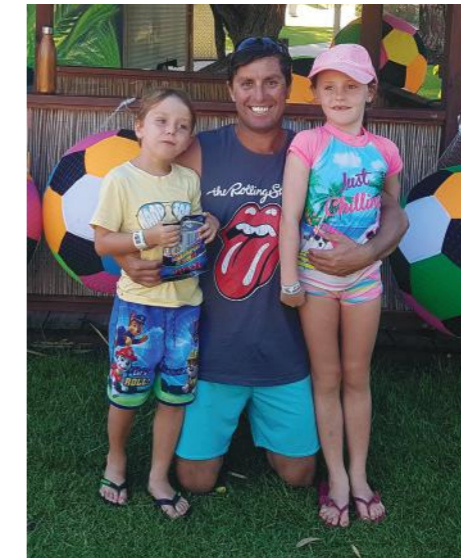
The diagnosis, while a shock, was not surprising. As a hard-working scaffolder on an oil rig, putting in 12+ hour days up to three weeks at a stretch, on his days off days off, Jason enjoyed spending time with his kids and relaxing with a beer. Quite a few beers ... actually.

Jason says he would often drink a carton of beer in a single day and in retrospect, he now sees he would use everyday stresses as a trigger to justify his heavy drinking.

"Someone would cut me off on the freeway, and I'd use that as an excuse to get angry and go and buy myself a six-pack," he says.

"I know it's my own fault, the situation I'm in now – it's self-inflicted," he acknowledges.

Jason is currently undergoing a life-saving trial supported by Charlies Foundation for Research. The trial is aimed at the cost, mortality and hospitalisations of those diagnosed with chronic liver disease.



The two-year Australia-wide trial is attempting to change circumstances around liver disease, including the re-admission rate of patients, as each re-admission is lengthy and costs around \$22,000.

It is based on the Chronic Disease Management Model (CDM), which has been successful in helping patients manage other life-threatening diseases including diabetes and heart disease.

This model allows patients to admit themselves to hospital before they reach a critical point. It allows the patient a better chance of understanding their disease and helps them keep on top of things like medications and check-ups through intervention from health care professionals both in the hospital and at home.

Jason is thrilled to be part of the trial. "It has been awesome," he says. "If I need anything, I can just call my Clinical Nurse and they are there for me."

"I come in every Wednesday to see them, they organise all my meds and if I didn't have that it'd be a lot harder," he says.

The father of two says he is determined to abstain from alcohol to allow his body the best possible chance to heal.

"I don't plan on drinking again," he says with determination. "I look at my kids and think: 'them or the beer?' and I just choose them."

Jason credits his abstinence to the support he is receiving on the medical trial. He says it is also helping him make improvements in other areas of life, including getting more sleep and eating a more nutritious diet.

Jason can't speak highly enough of the staff at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital.

"Everyone I've met here: they only want the best for the patients," Jason told us.

Now, with the ongoing support of his clinical team, Jason believes he's on the right path to getting well and he is just focusing on living his best life.

**"I've got nothing to lose. I nearly lost it all – and I've got everything to gain from here!"**

To support ground-breaking projects at Charlies, please make a secure online donation at [www.charliesfoundation.org.au](http://www.charliesfoundation.org.au)

If you enjoy reading our newsletter and would like to find out more about Charlies Foundation for Research and how you can support ground-breaking research in WA ➤ please visit [www.charliesfoundation.org.au](http://www.charliesfoundation.org.au) where you can also make a secure online donation.

## Tax time around the corner

Donors are the lifeblood of this Foundation – and researchers at Sir Charles Gairdner and Osborne Park Hospitals are immensely grateful for every donation: large or small.

As the primary fundraising body for medical research at these two world class hospitals, we bring together researchers, staff, patients, donors, sponsors and partners, providing \$750,000 in funding every year to support pioneering research projects right here in Perth.

Every time you make a tax-deductible donation to Charlies Foundation for Research, you are helping to support critical medical research that will change outcomes for patients today... and long into the future.

With tax time just around the corner, just a friendly reminder that if you are planning to make a donation soon, please ensure we receive it by 30 June. We will rush back your receipt so you can claim your generosity on your upcoming tax return.

Rest assured that we will invest your kind donation where it will have the most impact. That's just one of our many commitments to our valued donor.

➤ To find out more, visit [www.charliesfoundation.org.au/our-promise-to-you/](http://www.charliesfoundation.org.au/our-promise-to-you/)

## Ear Science Acknowledgement

Charlies Foundation for Research would like to clarify an item in our previous issue (Issue 4 published on 12 September 2018). The article 'Does our hearing hold the key to a cure for Alzheimer's and dementia' failed to fully describe the Ear Science Institute of Australia and its senior researcher, Dr Dona Jayakody's involvement in the research. Our apologies for this editorial error.



*Thanks again to our many wonderful supporters who took the time to respond to our 2019 Donor Survey.*

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*Vicki*