

# human services news

## Australia-wide trial on very early rehabilitation after stroke



Royal Melbourne Hospital's Associate Professor Julie Bernhardt, whose team will take part in a stroke early rehabilitation trial.

Royal Melbourne Hospital Physiotherapy Research Coordinator Associate Professor Julie Bernhardt leads a team awarded \$2.8 million for a trial of very early rehabilitation after stroke.

The five-year grant, awarded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, will enable the multidisciplinary team of stroke rehabilitation researchers based at the National Stroke Research Institute in Heidelberg to conduct the trial in 10 hospitals throughout Australia.

Getting patients up and about within 24 hours of suf-

fering a stroke is the focus of the A Very Early Rehabilitation Trial (AVERT) study.

'This research grant will allow us to complete the largest and most comprehensive rehabilitation study of its kind,' Associate Professor Bernhardt said.

'Not only will we determine whether very early rehabilitation saves lives and reduces disability, we will also look at the cost-effectiveness of the intervention.

'This research tests the effect of very early rehabilitation provided by physiotherapists and nurses.

'Preliminary research from Norway suggests very early rehabilitation is beneficial for stroke patients but this needs to be tested in a controlled trial.

Associate Professor Bernhardt has worked in the Royal Melbourne precinct for more than 15 years, first as a senior clinician in rehabilitation, then combining research training with clinical work.

She has been the hospital's Physiotherapy Research Coordinator since 1998 and is undertaking post-doctoral research at the National Stroke Research Institute.

DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN SERVICES

VOL 5-NO 6  
JULY 2006

ISSN 1327-5097

