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**NATIONAL
STROKE
RESEARCH
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News Release

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NEW STROKE REHABILITATION RESEARCH STARTS IN SCOTLAND

A new international stroke trial (called AVERT) that provides early exercise therapy within 24 hours of stroke has commenced in Scotland “We have found that exercises such as standing and walking can be started very early, patients are not too tired and it appears safe”, said Dr Julie Bernhardt, physiotherapist and AVERT Program Director. “We are now testing the impact of very early stroke rehabilitation on death and disability. We are excited that four enthusiastic stroke unit teams from the Monklands Hospital, Stirling Royal Infirmary, Western Infirmary and Wishaw General Hospital are the first UK hospitals to join our research team.”

While there have been many studies looking at the impact of different medications after stroke, no high quality trials have looked at whether a very early rehabilitation programme results in fewer deaths and less disability than current care. The very early rehabilitation trial is delivered by physiotherapy and nursing staff. People who get to these hospitals within 24 hours of a stroke may be eligible for the trial.

AVERT is a large multi-centre randomised trial that aims to recruit over 2000 stroke patients over the next three years. The AVERT trial is an initiative of the National Stroke Research Institute, Melbourne, Australia with centres in Australia and New Zealand well underway. The new Scottish centres are funded by Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland and coordinated by a Glasgow University research team and the Scottish Stroke Research Network.

For media enquires and interviews: Contact Professor Peter Langhorne, AVERT Trial Leader, Scotland | email p111m@clinmed.gla.ac.uk | phone 0141 211 4012

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