



Media Release
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RCH nurse honoured for home blood test research

Regular blood tests can be distressing for more than 130 Victorian children who rely on anticoagulant drug therapy.

Trips to pathology collection centres to draw blood from a vein, or to The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) for finger prick blood tests, are a heavy burden on families already dealing with major illness — particularly for those based in rural or regional areas.

So it's no surprise a project designed to extend home blood testing to warfarin-dependent children has been named a finalist in the innovation category of the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Led by Clinical Nurse Consultant Sophie Jones from the RCH Clinical Haematology Department, the project evaluated the impact of regular home self-testing, including clinical and quality of life impacts.

The project found teaching families to manage blood tests at home did not increase the risk of warfarin-related complications such as bleeding or thrombosis, making it safe to roll out to more RCH patients.

"Parents reported that home testing minimised stress, gave them an opportunity to control and participate in their child's care, and freed children to take part in everyday activities such as school and sports," Ms Jones said.

Child patients also reported improved quality of life, with comments such as: "I could go to cricket", "I don't miss out on fun things at school", and "It's better to do it at home with your mummy".

The program is one of five finalists in the Innovation in Nursing category of the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards. The winner will be announced at a gala dinner on 10 May, and will receive a \$10,000 grant to develop their service or program.

If the RCH is successful, the funds will be used to expand the home-testing program, which receives no Medicare rebate. Up to 30 children commence warfarin treatment at the RCH each year, and the grant would assist 5-10 of those patients.

The prize money is provided by ME Bank, a supporter of the awards since 2008.

HESTA is one of Australia's largest superannuation funds with more than 730,000 members. It is chosen by more people working in health and community services than any other fund.

Visit hestaawards.com to book tickets for the event or learn more about the awards.

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