



Department of Health
Government of Western Australia
South Metropolitan Area Health Service

PRESS RELEASE

October 2 2008

All in a heart beat

Sarah Hickey says she has her life back thanks to Fremantle Hospital Cardiologist Dr Andrew Liu.

Sarah (20) is looking forward to eating chocolate, having a good laugh and planning a holiday – all things she hasn't been able to do for two years.

Sarah had Supra Ventricular Tachycardia (SVT) which meant her heart could suddenly beat at abnormally and dangerously high levels at any time. Each time it happened Sarah was taken to hospital for treatment to stabilise her.

Sarah was put under Dr Liu's care after a holiday to Thailand saw her hospitalised for the condition. Since then she has had to live a cautious life with minimal exertion and excitement and dietary restrictions, gaining strength for the procedure.

Last week Sarah became the first patient in Fremantle Hospital's Cardiac Catheter Theatre (CCT) to have the procedure, which corrected the condition immediately. This was possible because of the installation of new sophisticated Electro Physiology (EP) system in the CCT.

Dr Liu was able to repair the electrical circuit in Sarah's heart restoring her rhythm to normal 70-80 beats per minute.

During the procedure an area of a short circuit was ablated - literally breaking the faulty circuit and restoring a regular heart beat. The EP system will enable many simple arrhythmia procedures to be performed in the theatre.

The EP has 128 channels, which record heart activity and functions, and is a vast improvement on the old system, which had 12 channels. It also means patients no longer have to be transferred to other hospitals for the simple procedures.

"We corrected the irregularity in Sarah's heart which will give her back quality of life and the confidence to continue her travelling," Dr Liu said.

"Sarah's procedure took about two hours to complete with an immediate result and a quick recovery. She was in hospital overnight to recover from the anaesthesia."

Dr Liu has performed many of these procedures in other hospitals around the world and is keen to do many more simple and complex cases using the new technology.

"It's nice to know I don't have to worry anymore; nothing will hold me back now – I can do anything," an emotional Sarah said.

CONTACT: Ali Biddiscombe. Public Relations Officer. 9431 2456

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Alma Street, Fremantle WA 6160
Postal Address: PO Box 480, Fremantle WA 6959
Telephone: (08) 9431 2416 Facsimile: 9431 3883
<http://www.fhhs.health.wa.gov.au>