



## Life-saving stroke treatment focus of new research

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A life-saving procedure to remove blood clots in stroke patients is the focus of a study being led by a specialist anaesthetist in a collaboration between anaesthetists, radiologists and neurologists at Auckland City, Wellington Regional and Christchurch Hospitals involving 550 patients.

Auckland City Hospital anaesthetist Dr Doug Campbell says this is the first multi-centre trial in the world to look at blood pressure during the relatively new procedure where the clot is removed through a mesh-like retrieval device inserted through the femoral artery in the groin to the brain.

The new procedure means the "golden window", when doctors can minimise or prevent permanent damage by removing the clots directly from the brain, has been expanded this year from six to 24 hours following the stroke. The surgery has resulted in some patients facing severe paralysis, being able to walk away from a serious stroke with little or no disability.

Most clot-removal procedures in New Zealand are performed under a general anaesthetic and the optimum blood pressure of the patient during surgery is vital to recovery.

Dr Campbell says patients in the study will be monitored for three months after the surgery to gauge recovery. He says it is hoped the research will reveal where blood pressure should be maintained during surgery for the best recovery results.

About 9000 people have a stroke in New Zealand each year and strokes are the country's second largest killer with 2000 people dying each year. There are estimated to be around 60,000 stroke survivors in New Zealand.