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Record grant for ANZCA CTN heart surgery infection trial

A heart surgery infection trial endorsed by the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) Clinical trials Network (CTN) has been awarded a record \$A8 million by the Medical Research Future Fund.

The trial's principal investigator, Associate Professor Trisha Peel, and Professor Paul Myles, founding chair of the ANZCA CTN, secured the funding to perform a clinical trial in 9000 patients undergoing heart surgery.

The trial will be co-ordinated at Monash University. It has also been endorsed by the Australasian Society of Infectious Diseases (ASID) Network and is supported by the Australian and New Zealand Society of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgeons (ANZSCTS).

The trial funding is the highest awarded in the history of the ANZCA CTN and the highest awarded trial in the Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Need grant initiative.

Infections following heart surgery lead to significant patient suffering and healthcare costs. The Duration of Cardiac Antimicrobial Prophylaxis Outcomes Study (CALIPSO) is an innovative, adaptive trial that will examine the optimal duration of antibiotic therapy to prevent these infections.

Administering antibiotics at the time of surgery is a common strategy to prevent infections, but it is not known if there is an additional benefit with giving these antibiotics in the postoperative period.

Associate Professor Trisha Peel is Antimicrobial Stewardship Services Lead at Alfred Hospital and Epworth HealthCare, an infectious diseases physician and researcher, and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Career Development Fellow. She leads the Surgical Infection Research Group at Monash University and has previously led other large multicentre trials including the NHMRC-funded Australian Surgical Antibiotic Prophylaxis (ASAP) Trial, one of the largest prophylaxis trials ever conducted.

Associate Professor Peel says the CALIPSO trial is important because while extending doses of antibiotic therapy after surgery is a common practice, the benefit has not been clearly established and there are also potential harms to consider in terms of antimicrobial resistance.

"Prevention of infections through strategies like antibiotic therapy is critical to ensure optimal patient outcomes. It is important that we strike a balance between preventing infection, while mitigating risks like antimicrobial resistance. The CALIPSO trial is uniquely placed to weigh these benefits and risks, and change practice around antibiotic therapy for heart surgery," she explained.

The health economic and microbiological impact of extending antimicrobial therapy will also be assessed as part of the trial which will involve dozens of hospitals across the ANZCA CTN in Australia, New Zealand, and other countries.

Link: <https://www.anzca.edu.au/profiles/ctn-trials/upcoming/calipso>

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