



Media Release

6 December 2022

City's \$15k grant may progress vital health research to benefit millions with rheumatological conditions across the globe

Main points:

- City of Cockburn has provided a \$15,000 grant to Spinnaker Health Research Foundation
- The funds will help Fiona Stanley Hospital Rheumatology consultant Dr Chanakya Sharma research a world-first pilot finger-prick test project to check the levels of the medication methotrexate in the blood of rheumatoid arthritis patients
- The City has donated grants worth \$130,000 to 10 medical research projects through Spinnaker since 2006.

The City of Cockburn has proudly provided a \$15,000 grant to Spinnaker Health Research Foundation, for a world-first pilot project with the potential to help millions of people receiving treatment for a broad range of rheumatological conditions globally.

The City has donated grants worth \$130,000 to 10 medical research projects through Spinnaker since 2006.

Based at WA's leading tertiary hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH), Spinnaker provides research grants to projects that will benefit people in the Southern Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) district.

This year's grant will enable FSH Rheumatology Consultant Dr Chanakya Sharma's pilot study of a finger-prick test to check levels of the medication methotrexate in the blood of rheumatoid arthritis patients.

The test could be used to monitor patients with a broad range of other rheumatological conditions that rely on the medication for treatment.

South metropolitan Perth has the highest number of people living with rheumatoid arthritis in Western Australia.

Affected people are dependent upon invasive monthly blood tests to check medication



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levels, which are time-consuming, uncomfortable, and costly to the public health system.

Dr Sharma said the test had the potential to alleviate the negative impacts of regular testing and improve the accuracy of medication dosage to maintain optimum health and quality of life.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the City's long-term contribution to Spinnaker's health research grant program was of immeasurable benefit to the local and broader community.

"In line with our Strategic Community plan, Council is delighted to advance and improve the quality of life of our diverse community, by providing safe, attractive and healthy programs, infrastructure, activities and opportunities."

This year's research projects demonstrate the breadth of research excellence at SMHS and include projects for liver cancer, cardiovascular disease and paediatrics.

Since 1999, Spinnaker has granted more than \$6m to support vital health research for West Australians.

Uniquely positioned in partnership with FSH, the Foundation funds the entire life cycle of health, from maternity to geriatrics, including newborns, paediatrics, life-impacting diseases such as cardiovascular and diabetes, cancer, mental health, and rare disease.

In 2021, the City's grant was allocated to a project led by Dr Oyekoya Ayonrinde at FSH to assess the relationship between fatty liver in adolescents and the silent cardiovascular risk in young adults.

The project is relevant to the SMHS because local cardiovascular disease rates are high, with cardiovascular risk in adults often having its origin in childhood. Fatty liver doubles a person's long-term risk of developing heart disease or stroke.

To support Dr Ayonrinde's work, programs planned in collaboration with Cockburn Integrated Health, SHRF secured a grant from the Telethon Trust to purchase a fibro scan, WA's first device for children.

Find out more about the Spinnaker Research Foundation on its [website](#).



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