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Geelong Hospital pioneers new hypertension technology

Geelong Hospital was among the first hospitals in the state today to use a new procedure to treat hypertension.

Around the world, hypertension affects approximately one in three adults.

The ground-breaking procedure is known as Renal Denervation (RDN) and uses radio frequency energy to deactivate the nerves responsible for high blood pressure.

By accessing and disabling these nerves, RDN aims to reduce traffic throughout the nervous system and thus provides a durable reduction in blood pressure without compromising the renal artery.

In a straightforward procedure, similar to an angioplasty, the physician inserts the small, flexible RDN system into the femoral artery in the upper thigh and threads it into the renal artery.

Once in place, the device delivers low-power radio frequency energy to deactivate the surrounding nerves. The treatment is minimally invasive and does not involve a permanent implant, allowing patients to recover quickly and soon return to their normal lives.

After six months, the average drop in blood pressure is in the range of 32mmHg (systolic)/12 mmHg (diastolic).

Dr Thomas Yip, cardiologist at Barwon Health who oversaw today's procedures, said the new technology presents an innovative tool to complement the current management of hypertension.

"With the assistance of research funding from A/Prof John Amerena, we were able to pioneer this technology at Geelong Hospital," Dr Yip said.

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