



PROUDLY SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH
ALL NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

29 May 2018

World MS Day, bringing us closer

Fatigue and blurred vision were the first signs for Chloe Baker that something wasn't right. In 2017, the 31-year-old moved home from New Zealand to be with her family and focus on her health. An eye test led to an MRI, and then a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS).

"The biggest shock was seeing the lesions on my brain and spine, I wasn't prepared for that. It was the one time I cried," said Chloe.

"Telling my family was one of the hardest things I've had to do, you have to be strong and calm, but on the inside, you're still processing what it means for you. My sister and I are very close and naturally she had a lot of questions, some of which I couldn't answer."

To help Chloe better understand MS and what the future held, her mum reached out to MSWA, and she now enjoys the support she needs to help her with her journey. While Chloe says her monthly infusions can be exhausting, her body is responding positively. Heat intolerance, double vision, fatigue and anxiety are her daily battles, but living a healthy lifestyle is something she now takes seriously, including no alcohol and being in bed before 9 o'clock.

As a young woman recently diagnosed with MS, Chloe wanted to share her story with others who may be going through a similar journey and started her own 'My MS blog' which aims to help others tackle the condition with a positive attitude.

"I'm really passionate about promoting my journey with MS in a relatable way. I hope my story can create awareness and encourage people to donate towards funding research," added Chloe.

For Chloe and many others with MS in Perth and around the world, the research by Professor Prue Hart is giving them hope. In a world-first, the Perth-based researcher has delayed the development of MS in high-risk individuals using narrowband UVB treatment, which is normally used to treat the skin condition psoriasis. Trials conducted by Professor Hart found that in 3 out of 10 people, who experienced a single episode of MS and were treated with UVB, the progression of their MS was halted.

"We're just blown away, with the results. We had two groups of 10 people, of the 10 who were given the UVB treatment, we've delayed the development of multiple sclerosis in 30% of them. Whereas those who didn't get the phototherapy, unfortunately all of them have progressed from a very early form of the condition to what is classified as MS," said Professor Hart.

The UV research project is partly funded by MSWA and is part of their record \$2.6 million invested into finding the cause, cure and treatment for MS and other neurological conditions. For a third year in a row, MSWA has set aside substantial amounts of money for local



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research, and this year alone, directed \$500,000 to support research projects like Professor Hart's.

"Professor Hart's trial and results are very exciting and it's fantastic that this is happening in Perth. It could be a vital breakthrough or at least be another piece in the jigsaw puzzle for people all around the world being able to better manage or control their MS," said MSWA CEO, Marcus Stafford AM.

World MS Day on Wednesday, 30 May brings the global MS community together to share stories, raise awareness and campaign for everyone affected by the neurological condition.

The global theme for World MS Day 2018 is 'Bringing us Closer'. It encourages people to share their journey with MS, provides opportunities to feel connected and acknowledged, and celebrates the research that is bringing us closer to finding a cause and cure.

"World MS Day is a great way of bringing everyone together for an important cause. MSWA recognises the importance of cutting-edge research and over the past 10 years we've invested \$10.9 million towards finding the cause, better treatments and a cure for MS," added Mr Stafford.

"We have some exciting opportunities for you to get involved on World MS Day, including a sunset yoga class, MSWA Sensory Hub and our annual Street Appeal in the CBD. The day will include MSWA ambassadors, volunteers, families and friends all there to help raise vital funds and awareness for people living with MS."

To find out how you can show your support on World MS Day, go to www.mswa.org.au

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