

2 December 2016
Court Ref: COR 2016 000708

Sheean Werkmeister
Coroner Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
Southbank 3006 Victoria
Via email: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Re: Investigation into the death of Alfred Oliver

Thank you for your letter dated 30 August 2016, with the included copy of the Findings Into Death Without Inquest by Her Honour Judge Hawkins, State Coroner of Victoria.

The coroner's recommendation to the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) has been implemented. This includes the following measures, based on paragraph 54 of the Findings document:

1. "RANZCO will release a safety alert to ophthalmologists via RANZCO email news alerts with a reminder regarding TIA diagnosis and the risk of cerebrovascular accident (CVA)."

RANZCO has released the following safety alert via the RANZCO E-News, which is emailed to the entire RANZCO Fellowship, on Tuesday, 22 August 2016:


TIA diagnosis and referral: *Fellows are reminded that patients experiencing transient ischaemic attack (TIA) are at increased risk of a CVA. In these circumstances timely medical assessment is indicated. RANZCO is now developing a patient information leaflet on this matter, which will be made available via the RANZCO Website in due course.*

2. "RANZCO will start a process of developing a new information leaflet for patients with TIA, emphasising the urgency of following up with further medical attention from a General Practitioner or an Emergency Department".

An information leaflet for ophthalmology patients diagnosed with a TIA has been produced, with considerable clinical input from the RANZCO Public Health Committee, Clinical Standards Committee, and Therapeutics Committee, as well as the Neuro-ophthalmology Society of Australia (a RANZCO Special Interest Group). Once completed, the leaflet has been made available via the RANZCO website in the following link: <https://ranzco.edu/ArticleDocuments/233/TRANSIENT%20ISCHAEMIC%20ATTACKS.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y>. It was also advertised to all RANZCO Fellows via the RANZCO E-News on Tuesday, 18 October 2016. A copy of the leaflet is attached to this letter.

We apologise for the small delay in sending you this letter of confirmation. Should you require any further details on this matter, please contact RANZCO Policy Officer Guy Gillor on ggillor@ranzco.edu.


Kind regards,



David Andrews,
RANZCO CEO

TIA

TRANSIENT ISCHAEMIC ATTACKS
(TIA) AND THE EYE



You have been given an urgent referral for suspected TIA. It is **CRITICAL** that you follow up your referral and medication.



Please see more details about TIA on the otherside of this brochure

WHAT IS A TIA?

A transient ischaemic attack (TIA) is a brief loss of oxygen to one particular part of the brain. Because the problem is temporary, the neurological symptoms caused by the loss of oxygen resolve spontaneously.

TIA's are warnings of possible serious problems involving the brain's blood supply, and are also known as 'mini strokes' – therefore URGENT investigations and review by a stroke physician are needed.

The eye has the same blood supply as the brain. Therefore, temporary loss of vision (like a curtain being pulled over the sight) in one eye may sometimes be due to a TIA. Other visual symptoms of TIA's include loss of part of the vision in both eyes or double vision.

The most common cause of loss of oxygen to a part of the brain is narrowing of a major blood vessel in the neck, known as carotid artery disease. Other causes of a TIA include irregularities of heart rhythm or a tear in the lining of a blood vessel. All of these conditions can be life-threatening. It is vital that you be assessed and treated for these conditions before they cause a permanent stroke.

If you have been identified as **high risk** for a stroke, you should be assessed **urgently by a neurologist** to facilitate rapid management. If you have been identified as **low risk**, your ophthalmologist or GP should commence initial therapy and refer you to a specialist TIA clinic to be **seen within seven days**.

WHAT ARE THE NON-VISUAL SYMPTOMS OF STROKE OR TIA?

- Symptoms are usually sudden in onset, but patients can sometimes wake with them
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling sensation on one side of your face or body
- Difficulty speaking clearly
- Trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination.

If you have recurrent visual symptoms or any of the above symptoms, you must present **immediately** to an emergency department for a more urgent stroke work-up.

Stroke is preventable if the underlying cause is found and treated early.

For reliable information of the internet search for:



- Stroke Foundation Australia TIA
- NICE guidelines for TIA
- Harvard medical center patient information TIA
- American Academy of Neurology TIA

PRACTITIONER CONTACT DETAILS: