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ATRIAL FIBRILLATION STUDY SEEKS PARTICIPANTS

Contributed by Laura Hamilton, Research Project Manager; Sarah Shaw, Research Associate; Alyssa Roy, Communications Specialist, IMPACT-AF

Catherine* was watching TV with her husband when suddenly, her heart started racing without reason. “It was very scary,” she said.

What Catherine didn’t know was that she was experiencing her first episode of atrial fibrillation (A Fib).

A Fib, the most common heart rhythm abnormality, affects about 20,000 Nova Scotians. For people like Catherine, living with A Fib is more than just a frightening experience, it’s a serious condition — one that can drastically increase stroke risk and lead to a poorer quality of life.

Unfortunately, many patients with A Fib, who are at risk of stroke, do not receive guideline-recommended blood thinners, and of those that do, up to 50 per cent are not well controlled. A Nova Scotia research study — Integrated Management Program Advancing Community Treatment of Atrial Fibrillation (IMPACT-AF) — is looking to improve care for people with A Fib through the use of interactive, web-based tools that use best practice guidelines to monitor a patient’s condition and alert their health-care providers to any recommended treatment changes. Patients have their own tool to record blood pressure, heart rate and symptoms, receive health alerts and access education and motivational support.

Volunteers needed!

To test if these tools can be reduce the number of strokes, emergency department visits and hospital admissions, IMPACT-AF needs 200 primary care providers and 4,000 of their patients to participate in a 12-month clinical trial. Half of the providers can use the web-tools, while the other half will continue with usual care. People with A Fib, or their caregivers, may choose to use the online tools, but it’s completely voluntary. Also, participants don’t need to take any new medications or make additional visits to their doctor.

Why participate?

Advances in health technology would not be possible without the participation of people like you who know first-hand what it’s like living with A Fib. With your support, we can contribute to improved care, quality of life and heart health outcomes for Nova Scotians with A Fib. Similar tools can then be designed to support other chronic conditions like diabetes.

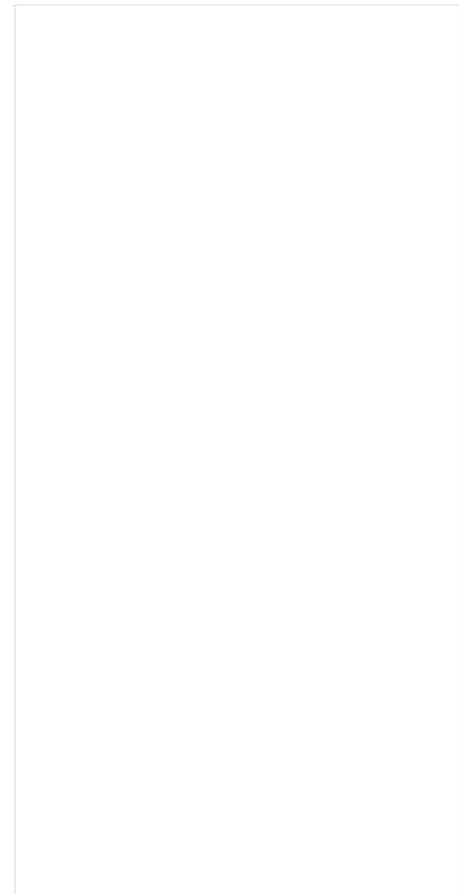
IMPACT-AF, led by Dr. Jafna Cox (QEII cardiologist), is supported by a Bayer HealthCare research grant. More than 100 family doctors and 500 of their patients are already participating, including some residents from the Cape Breton area.

Interested in joining? Please visit www.impact-af.ca or call us at 902-473-6309 or toll-free 1-855-550-0557.

* Not her real name.

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