



FACT SHEET Genetic Heart Disease

1. Since 1990, at least 40 heart conditions that are directly caused by a fault in our genetic make-up have been identified.
2. Every year, 1 in 3 Australians die from some form of cardiovascular disease.
3. More than 400 young Australians (aged less than 35 years) will die suddenly each year from cardiovascular disease, with an average of 8 young people dying each week.
4. Direct (child/brother/sister/parent) relatives of people with an inherited heart disease have a 1 in 2 (50%) chance of inheriting the same genetic heart condition.
5. Once a diagnosis is made, other members of the family can be tested and treated, effectively stopping any further deaths from Sudden Cardiac Death in that family line.
6. Professor Semsarian and his team at the Centenary Institute identify faults in key genes which cause genetic heart diseases and sudden death. The long term aim of Centenary Institute's work is to be able to switch off the faulty dominant gene that causes genetic heart disease.
7. Approximately 30% of deaths occurring in people less than 35 years of age are listed as "undetermined" where the heart appears normal at post mortem. Professor Semsarian believes that often the cause of death will be an electrical disorder such as Long QT Syndrome.
8. Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy or HCM, which leads to a thickening of the heart muscle, is the most common form of genetic heart disease, affecting 1 in every 500 Australians.

It is believed many famous people have died from sudden cardiac death including:

- Reggie Lewis, basketball player for the Boston Celtics
- Mark-Vivian Foe, Cameroon soccer player

Genetic heart diseases included on the Registry:

Inherited Cardiomyopathies:

- Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy
- Familial Dilated Cardiomyopathy
- Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy
- Left Ventricular Non-compaction
- Familial Restrictive Cardiomyopathy

Electrical Disorders:

- Familial Long QT Syndrome
- Catecholaminergic Polymorphic VT
- Brugada Syndrome
- Idiopathic Ventricular Fibrillation