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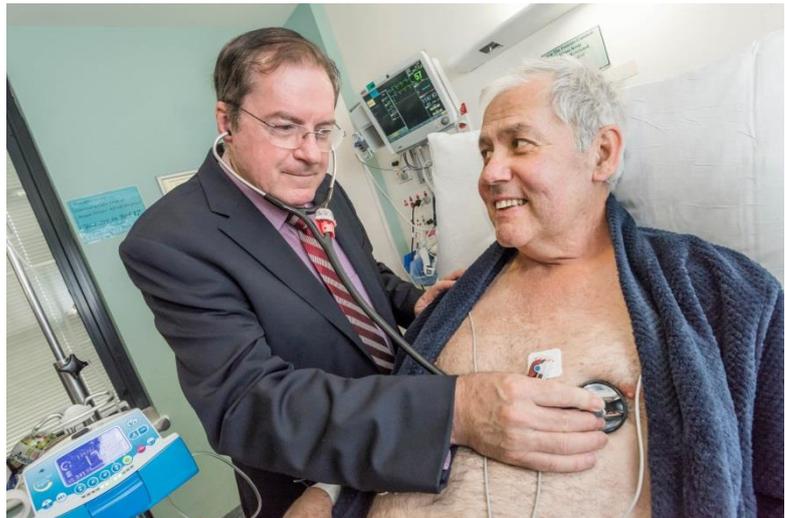
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## Dedicated Dr and researcher takes out the top prize

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital cardiologist Professor Anthony Keech has been awarded RPA Foundation's top prize, the coveted Research Medal for excellence in medical research.

Professor Keech, who is also the Deputy Director of the National Health and Medical Research Council Clinical Trials Centre, received the medal and a \$50,000 prize for his lifetime of contributions to treating cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

“All of my research depends on big teams of people. Sometimes I am leading those teams and other times I am part of the team. For me, I am accepting the medal on behalf of all the people I’ve worked with rather than patting myself on the back,” Professor Keech said.



Professor Keech on a ward round with one of his patients.

His career is a fast paced balancing act between science and medicine, but Professor Keech thrives on the contrast of ward rounds, clinic and the laboratory.

“Research is a constant reminder that you can always help a lot more people through findings which thousands of doctors around the world can implement than you can with face-to-face, one-on-one interactions in the clinic.

“I do clinics every week where I can only see 20 patients a day but with research, over a couple of years, the results might be reaching out to hundreds of thousands of patients at risk of heart disease or those who’ve just had a heart attack,” he said.

Among many breakthroughs, Professor Keech is known for his role investigating the effects of fibrate therapy on heart disease in 10,000 patients with type 2 diabetes and also evaluated its effect on retinal disease.

“I have been lucky enough to be involved in most of the global trials that have shown the value of treatments we use when a patient comes in with a heart attack anywhere in the world including use of nitrates, anti-coagulants, aspirin, clot busting drugs and anti-platelet drugs.

“Fibrate therapy specifically targets fat levels in the blood than the cholesterol levels and these drugs have shown not only could they reduce heart disease in people with very high fat levels but they prevented eye disease and kidney disease and risks of amputations by a third,” he said.

The award enables him to further his research into cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and comes with life changing capabilities.

“My colleagues and I are starting to work on trying to prevent irregular heartbeats in patients with sleep apnoea. I’m also working with other colleagues here at RPA about trying to get better outcomes for patients who have had an acute heart attack,” he said.

Professor Keech's influence on medicine has extended far beyond his own research, through his many PhD students and interactions with colleagues.

“I am thrilled to have been selected and will be putting the prize money toward basic science and clinical work of unblocking arteries and identifying blood markers of complications in diabetes.

“Both projects would involve recruiting masters or PhD students to help with that work and hopefully skill up the next generation of doctors who might do good research,” he said.