

Need for more education at heart

Kate Lemmon | 11th October 2010 – Ipswich Advertiser



Photo: Claudia Baxter 0C081OBT

Lynda Moynahan lives with a heart condition called atrial fibrillation, which causes irregular heartbeat and frequently goes undiagnosed.

WHEN Lynda Moynahan was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, she was confused and at a loss as to where to turn to for support.

Atrial fibrillation is a serious heart condition that significantly increases the risk of stroke and heart failure.

The Brassall registered nurse, 62, was diagnosed with AF in 2000 and found there was little support or information regarding AF and its management for Australian patients.

She is passionate about educating others about AF to ensure they receive treatment.

"I didn't know where to turn to get support on how to get on with my life," Mrs Moynahan said.

"Most people have not even heard of the condition."

Of about 2.4 million Australians aged 65 years and over living with a warning sign that increases their risk of AF, only three in 10 believe they are at increased risk.

Almost half of respondents are also unaware of the condition.

Warning signs and contributing conditions include an irregular pulse rate, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

Professor Ben Freedman, a cardiologist at Concord Hospital, said AF was a very common condition with one in five at risk of developing it during their life.

"Unfortunately, the community is largely unaware of AF or the conditions that predispose to it," Prof Freedman said.