**Nation-wide fundraiser to beat ‘SCAD’ heart attacks in healthy, fit adults**

Survivors of an uncommon form of heart attack that mainly strikes women in the prime of their lives are joining forces to raise much-needed awareness and fund life-saving research.

Mother of two Jen from the Central Coastis urging Australians to sign up for the annual fundraising SCADaddle – a 5km walk or run that will fund research into SCAD heart attacks – the leading cause of heart attacks in women under 50.

Jen was just 36 years old with two young boys aged 11 months and three when she suffered a SCAD heart attack. “With no family history of heart disease, no high blood pressure or any concerns to do with the heart, the diagnosis of a Heart Attack was a complete shock. The cardiologist said my husband saved my life by recognising the signs and rushing me to hospital. I was in hospital for 8 days & was discharged on my littlest’s 1st birthday. Unlike so many other mums that had suffered a fatal SCAD, my small boys still had their mum.”

**What is SCAD?**

SCAD stands for Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection. During SCAD, a sudden tear occurs within the layers of one or more arteries to the heart. This tear blocks blood flow, which can lead to cardiac arrest and sometimes death. SCAD is the #1 cause of a heart attack in women under age 50, as well as the #1 cause of a heart attack in women who are pregnant and new mothers. The average age of SCAD sufferers is just 42, 80% of sufferers are women and it typically occurs in healthy, often fit adults with NO standard risk factors for heart disease.

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in Australian women, killing almost three times more women than breast cancer each year. Yet funding for heart research pales in comparison, with $220m invested in Cardiovascular Disease per year compared with the Australian Government investing more than $4.9b in Cancer Research in 2020-21.

Professor Jason Kovacic of the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, which is leading Australia's first and largest research program into SCAD said: **“Until recently, SCAD was considered a rare disease, with little known about its causes or why it mainly affects women. But we are finally starting to understand its triggers and have recently discovered 16 key genes associated with SCAD.**

**“Heart disease is the biggest killer of Australian women and it’s vital we continue researching this disease so we can develop preventative treatments and provide genetic diagnoses for families affected by SCAD.”**

**A Survivor-Led Movement**

Medical professionals often dismiss young and healthy women who present with heart attack symptoms and often just put these symptoms down to stress, leading to long term heart damage and sometimes death. Inspired by the fundraising and advocacy by survivors across the world, SCAD survivors in Australia are looking to change this through funding to increase education and research into the optimal diagnosis, treatment and ultimately cure.

Mum of two Jen added: “We need everyone involved to educate, advocate, and to raise awareness and research funds. Together we’ll find the answers we need, and I will be asking all of my friends and family to join me this October. I want to ensure that SCAD heart attacks don’t affect my children or my grandchildren.”

**Together We Can Beat SCAD and Save Lives**

This October the 9th Annual **5k SCADaddle for Research** will raise much-needed funds for Australian medical research into SCAD Heart Attacks. SCAD survivors, family and friends are encouraged to join the 5k SCADaddle for Research on the Sunshine Coast, in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart or Perth or to walk 5kms in their local area anytime in October.

For more information, to read more survivor stories or to make a donation go to [www.scadresearch.com.au](http://www.scadresearch.com.au), follow SCAD Research on Facebook @SCADResearchAust or Twitter @SCADResearchAus or [register here](https://www.mycause.com.au/events/scadaddle2023)

**To arrange an interview with Professor Jason Kovacic or with a SCAD Heart Attack survivor, email** **info@scadresearch.com.au** **or call President SCAD Research Australia Sarah Ford on 0413 486 833**