

Question on Notice
No. 556
Asked on 17 April 2007

MR ELMES asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the Nu-Life Cardiac programme at Noosa Hospital which has demonstrated significant clinical and financial gains which, if provided to the general Queensland population, has the potential to reduce cardiac re-admissions to Queensland hospitals and additionally, primary admission rates for chronic disease processes could be significantly reduced freeing up beds for elective surgery and as I am aware that a proposal is currently before the Minister to initiate such a programme—

Will he advise the current situation of this proposal?

ANSWER:

I was provided with the Nu-Life proposal during a meeting with the authors of the programme. The complexity of the issues as they relate to cardiac care and rehabilitation warranted expert input from cardiac specialists.

I directed the proposal to the Statewide Cardiac Clinical Network, which has representatives from cardiac services across Queensland Health. The programme material presented was reviewed by members of the Network which includes cardiovascular experts, including those who have expertise and interest in cardiac rehabilitation.

Their advice was that whilst the proposal described a novel type of exercise and hypothesized this would improve cardiovascular wellbeing, the proposal research was not considered to be conclusive.

The programme is innovative and further research would be beneficial to demonstrate that the assumptions that were made in relationship to the potential for the programme to provide significant clinical and financial gains and reduce cardiac readmissions to Queensland hospitals. The proposal did not include the results of any comparative studies to show the benefit of the Nu-life programme over standard cardiac rehabilitation. Despite the alleged benefits of the programme there was a significant drop out rate of patients.

Further research into this type of programme implementation would provide the scientific rigour required to identify the potential long term benefits and mechanisms to maintain higher retention rates of patients to completion of the program. The Network recommended that this type of proposal would be well placed with a research body and recommendations to that effect were made.

Queensland Health will continue to support cardiac rehabilitation services and will monitor innovative programs to assist in guiding people to make better lifestyle choices. In the management of cardiovascular disease there is a concerted effort to modify adverse lifestyle habits of smoking, inactivity and obesity. In addition control of high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes are key measures that are being undertaken to prevent the development of heart disease and improve the outcome of individuals who already have established heart disease.