

News Release

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Trial drug proves life-saver for Patricia

Southend University Hospital's passion for contributing to clinical research has transformed the life of stroke patient, Patricia Jacobs.

Patricia, 65, was woken in the night at her home in Waltham Abbey by a severe pain in her arm. Her face had dropped and her speech was slurred – classic symptoms that she had suffered a stroke.

A scan at her local hospital in Harlow revealed a clot in the brain but by then she had already gone past the three-hour 'window of opportunity' for doctors there to administer thrombolytic (clot-busting) drugs.

So Patricia and her family embarked on an ambulance dash across Essex to Southend University Hospital which is one of the leading centres for the International Stroke Thrombolysis trial, known as IST-3. This can be administered in suitable patients up to six hours after the onset of stroke.

As the minutes ticked by, Patricia was becoming more and more incapacitated.

After consultation Patricia's husband, Malcolm and two daughters, she was put on the trial which gave her a 50-50 chance of receiving the clot-busting drug. The odds went in her favour as she received the drugs within six hours and by the following day she was able to move and talk again quite normally.

She said: "As soon as I arrived at Southend the consultant was here doing all the tests. It was unbelievable – full on. There is no doubt that he and his team saved my life. I can walk, talk and do everything people do."

But Patricia still was not out of the woods. While still being cared for on the acute stroke unit, her heart stopped beating. The bedside monitor alerted staff and, after

being resuscitated, Patricia was fitted with an implantable defibrillator at Basildon Hospital's cardiothoracic centre.

Southend stroke consultant, Dr Paul Guyler, who is also the lead consultant for stroke research in Essex and Hertfordshire, said: "Following a stroke, people are more prone to heart problems. Fortunately, she was here on the unit and it was picked up straight away.

"Patricia has now made a virtually full recovery.

"I am delighted that our involvement in clinical trials has made such a huge difference for another of our patients."

The IST-3 trial is just one of a range of clinical trials across many different specialities including cancer, rheumatology and ophthalmology as well as stroke which are benefiting Southend University Hospital's patients. Members of the public will be able to find out more about this vital research at a special open day being held in the hospital boardroom from 10am to 3pm on Wednesday, September 1.

Christopher Khuoge, Southend University Hospital's coordinator for clinical trials, said: "We are asking more and more of our clinicians to become involved in clinical research and offer these benefits to patients."

Patricia, who can now look forward to the wedding of her younger daughter Emma next month (August), said: "I simply cannot fault the service at Southend Hospital. They have saved my life."

With pic

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