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June Cathcart's Story

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June learns to deal with Guillain-Barre Syndrome

Stawell resident June Cathcart was the among Guillain-Barre Syndrome sufferers who recognised the GBS Awareness Day yesterday.

Struck with GBS in 1988, June has like many others had to learn to adapt to a different lifestyle.

Guillain-Barre Syndrome and Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy are rare paralysing and potentially catastrophic disorders of the peripheral nerves.



● June Cathcart active in water aerobics in overcoming her GBS illness.

The cause is unknown.

GBS in its acute form is mostly preceded by some intrusion to the body such as influenza, gastroenteritis and more rarely vaccination or an operation.

A person stricken with GBS may become paralysed within a few days whereas CIDP in its chronic form takes longer to develop and progresses slowly.

Symptoms of the illness are severe pain, tingling, numbness, poor co-ordination, lack of sensation, muscle weakness, unusual sensations, breathlessness and fatigue. Fortunately most patients will recover to a degree.

There may be some who may make a full recovery whereas some may use a wheelchair indefinitely. Early diagnosis is important.

Since 1988 June has become a member of the Victorian Support Group known as Thev IN Group founded by James Gerrand, a patient with CIDP.

"I have found the Group to be friendly, helpful and communicative," June said.

At oresent medical research is being carried out at the Neuromuscular Laboratory at the Melbourne Children's Hospital (Director Dr Andrew Kornberg).

A major intent of holding the Awareness Day was to remind the public of the importance of donating blood.

Such donations are of vital importance to the treatment of GBS and CIDP as CSP P/L relies on such blood donation to prepare the Intragam which is a favoured medical treatment.

For further information telephone 03 9853 6443.

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