

'Golden hour' awaits rural docs in Townsville

DOCTORS from every corner of rural Queensland are assembling in Townsville this week for their annual check-up on the state of regional healthcare.

The 28th Rural Doctors Association of Queensland conference returns to the North Queensland city for the first time in 15 years, taking the opportunity to hear from some of the world's foremost experts on delivering first-class medical treatment to those living in the bush.

Leading the stellar line up of speakers will be Townsville medico and academic Geoff Dobson, who holds a Professorial Chair in the School of Medicine and Dentistry at James Cook University.

Dr Dobson will open the conference on Thursday, June 8 relaying the message to frontline rural GPs how the horrific experience from some of the world's major battlefields could one day lead to better emergency care for rural patients injured in remote locations.

During his keynote speech, Dr Dobson will explain how his research team at JCU and US defence personnel are trialling new treatments to reduce blood loss and shock during the initial, crucial minutes of a patient sustaining major injury.

Doctors call this critical window the "golden hour", a period of time frequently rendered meaningless when treating patients in many of Australia's rural and remote locations, Dr Dobson explained.

"The vast distances and diversity of climates and terrains place major limitations on pre-hospital trauma care and aeromedical retrieval," he said.

"Time is the killer."

Dr Dobson's team and personnel from the US Special Operations Command and US Navy are developing a new 'ultra-small' volume drip therapy mixture to treat bleeding, shock and traumatic brain injury sustained in remote locations.

"In 2015, we showed the therapy reduced internal blood loss by 60 per cent over five hours, and increased survival after traumatic brain injury with and without major blood loss and shock," he said.

"This new trauma initiative may assist rural specialist groups and missions of organisations such as CareFlight Australia and the Royal, Flying Doctor Service.

Supporting Rural Doctors and Rural Communities

“This is why high quality pre-hospital telemedicine with rapid access to aeromedical transport is paramount to an effective and efficient health care system in remote locations.”

The RDAQ conference runs until Saturday, June 10, with Federal Assistant Minister for Rural Health David Gillespie, State Health Minister Cameron Dick and Opposition Health spokesman John-Paul Langbroek attending for the medico-political forum on Friday.

conference.rdaq.com.au

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