Flushes linked to heart attacks

ERIN LYONS

WOMEN who suffer from hot flushes and night sweats after menopause are 70 per cent more likely to have a heart attack, angina or stroke.

New research from the University of Queensland (UQ) reveals women of any age who experience these symptoms, also known as vasomotor symptoms or VMS, are more likely to experience non-fatal cardiovascular events.

The risk increases by 40 per cent for women who have not yet gone through menopause.

School of Public Health PhD student Dr Dongshan Zhu said until now it was unclear whether VMS was associated with heart disease.

"But now we know it to be true," he said.

Dr Zhu explained the risk of cardiovascular events was more related to the severity of the hot flushes and night sweats rather than the frequency or duration.

"We found women with severe VMS were more than twice as likely to experience a non-fatal cardiovascular event compared with women who had no symptoms," he said.

As part of the research, academics at UQ examined data from 24,000 women living in Australia, the US and United Kingdom. They were surveyed and monitored at age 40 and again at 60.

The study's senior author, Professor Gita Mishra, said the findings could have a significant influence on women who need clinical treatment.

However, researchers still aren't sure why hot flushes and night sweats are linked to cardiovascular disease in women, but hormones could have something to do with it.

They believe these menopausal symptoms could act as an early indicator of a woman's future cardiovascular health.

"Those with severe symptoms before or after menopause may need close monitoring by their GP," Prof Mishra said.

"It is important to remember this is just about increased risk."

She also urged women to take necessary steps to reduce their risk in other ways, such as maintaining healthy weight, eating well and exercising.

Market forces: Theo's big plans

When Theo Maras takes the reins at Adelaide Central Market, it will be like coming home. **CELESTE VILLANI** spoke to the property mogul and lover of fresh food.

Incoming Central Market Authority boss Theo Maras. He says the market played an important role in his childhood. Inset, scenes at the market in the 1950s and '60s, and an artist's impression of the proposed redevelopment. Main picture: Tait Schmaal

ADELAIDE Central Market has played a big role in property mogul Theo Maras's life since he was a youngster.

After emigrating to Australia from Greece when he was four, he would visit the market with his family to embrace his multicultural roots and source the best fresh produce.

"At the age of 4½ , I have very clear, clear memories of coming here on Saturdays and buying all the continental products," Mr Maras says.

"Feta cheese – where else could you buy it from?

"Where else can you buy olives or pecorino? For my family, it was an eclectic place.

"I still come here every Saturday ... we buy fresh."

The founder and chairman of development company the Maras Group will next month take the reins of the Adelaide Central Market Authority on a three-year contract.

His vision is to continue to transform it into one of the biggest and best markets in the world.

He succeeds businessman Nick Begakis, who was chairman in 2014 and elected again to the position in 2017.

Mr Maras, who is also past chairman of the Rundle Mall Management Authority, says his priorities include ensuring the market is easy to access and enjoy, as well as making sure traders continually boost sales.

It means supporting traders through the construction phase of the $400 million Adelaide Central Market Arcade redevelopment, due to start in May.

Adelaide City Council plans to build a 35-storey residential, commercial and retail building to make the precinct a "world-class fresh-produce market and visitor attraction".

The tower will include specialty retail, food and beverage areas, a central public hall, public rooftop gardens, a 249-room hotel, 210 apartments, a supermarket, offices, 260 carparks and a childcare centre.

Mr Maras was the chairman of the project's design review panel, using more than four decades of building and construction knowledge to get the best possible outcome.

The construction phase will not affect traders in the food hall, says Mr Maras, who drove a major regeneration of the city's East End during the 1980s and '90s.

He has suggested dropping parking prices at the market, with support from the council, to continue to bring people to the precinct during the build.

"Traders are concerned, and I don't blame them, about what is going to happen during the course of construction," Mr Maras says.

"And my clear knowledgeable, passionate attitude is that there will not be a problem.

"We will look at making it easy, accessible and appealing for people for come in to shop and stay."

Mr Maras plans to support arcade traders who have been given about four years' notice that a redevelopment was on the cards.

"I'll give you a little bit of a hint," he says.

"Right at the middle of the arcade, as you walk through, there is a bloke who sells lottery tickets who only has a little stand. When the demolition happens, we will put a wall up and he can go in front of it so people aren't looking at a blank wall – we have something there.

"We will look at every opportunity, every square inch (for traders to relocate into the food hall)."

Mr Maras says it is "absolutely perfect" timing for the redevelopment, with the project set to create jobs and business opportunities to help the city recover from COVID-19.

He says there will be no delays to the project despite the pandemic.

"What happens here will be for the next 50 years, so I hope we can do something that we are proud of and that people want and love," Mr Maras says.

$243b – Bezos is back atop rich list

THE TIMES

THE world's wealthiest man has just become richer than anyone has ever been once again, just a year after losing a chunk of his fortune in the most expensive divorce ever.

Jeff Bezos, the founder and chief executive of Amazon, commands a net worth that rose to $243 billion this week, more than the GDP of Hungary or Algeria.

A rise in global demand for delivered items because of the pandemic has driven Amazon's share price up by more than 50 per cent this year, even as it has faced public anger and criticism over employee safety standards.

The valuation by the Bloomberg Billionaires Index broke the previous mark that Mr Bezos, 56, set in September 2018, when he was valued at $US167.7 billion. Four months later, he and his wife of 25 years, MacKenzie Bezos, announced they would divorce.

Last June it emerged that Mr Bezos, who also owns The Washington Post and Blue Origin, the commercial rocket company, had agreed to transfer a quarter of their jointly-held Amazon stock to his former wife, equivalent to a 4 per cent stake in the company.

At the time, the settlement was valued at $54 billion, instantly making Ms Bezos, 50, who married Mr Bezos a year before he set up Amazon from their garage in Seattle, the world's fourth richest woman.

She is now the 13th richest person on the planet, and the second-wealthiest woman, after Francoise Bettencourt, the granddaughter of the founder of L'Oreal. Her net worth is now $81 billion, due to the surge in Amazon's stock.

Amazon's success has underscored the widening wealth gap in the US during the country's worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Ms Bezos announced in March that she had signed the Giving Pledge, a philanthropic undertaking devised by Microsoft founder Bill Gates and investor Warren Buffett to convince the world's richest people to give half their wealth to charity during their lifetimes. Mr Bezos has not committed to the pledge but he tweeted that he was proud of his ex-wife for doing so.

Washington Redskins to review controversial name

THE Washington Redskins American football team has announced it would conduct "a thorough review" of its name, a day after sponsor FedEx asked that it be changed.

Pressure has been building for years to replace the name, criticised as a slur against Native Americans but the team's majority owner Dan Snyder has resisted.

"We'll never change the name, it's that simple," he said in 2013. "NEVER. You can use caps."

On Friday, Mr Snyder, 55, said the review process "allows the team to take into account not only the proud tradition and history of the franchise but also input from our alumni, the organisation, sponsors, the National Football League and the local community it is proud to represent on and off the field".

FedEx owns the naming rights to FedEx Field, the Redskins stadium, under a 27-year, $292 million deal that went into effect in 1999. Its chairman is also a minority owner of the team.

The franchise has used the Redskins nickname since 1933, when it was based in Boston.

The move is the latest indication of how corporate America is adjusting to the wave of racial-justice protests that spread across the nation last month. The gravity of those demonstrations was underlined this week when it emerged that 700 troops from the US 82nd Airborne Division were issued with bayonets as they stood ready to protect Washington during Black Lives Matter protests.

President Donald Trump declared on June 1 that he was sending "thousands of heavily armed troops" to quell riots and looting. They remained outside the capital, however, and it was left to the National Guard and riot police to maintain order.

Two Democratic members of the House of Representatives, Raja Krishnamoorthi, of Illinois, and Ted Lieu, of California, said: "It is difficult for us to imagine a circumstance which could necessitate or justify the deployment of bayonets against American civilians."

PAGE 47: TRUMP MOUNTS ADDRESS

A Washington Redskin.

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Shhh, not in front of the speaker...words that wake up Alexa

YOU are happily watching TV, minding your own business, when the living room smart-speaker inexplicably awakens, ready to take instructions.

It is a scene that will be familiar to many owners of voice assistant devices, which are only meant to activate when humans say their name.

Now academics have listed more than 1000 terms and phrases that popular smart-speaker brands incorrectly interpret as "wake-up calls if they crop up in TV dialogue.

For instance, Amazon devices go into active mode if they mistake "unacceptable" or "a letter" for Alexa, the name of the tech giant's virtual assistant.

The world "election" can also trigger Alexa, if spoken in a particular accent.

Apple's virtual assistant is meant to be hailed by "Hey Siri" but also responds to "Hey Jerry" and "a city", according to the researchers from Ruhr-Universitat Bochum (RUB) and the Max Planck Institute in Germany.

Perhaps forgivably, Google Assistant can mistake "OK, cool" for "OK, Google". However the academics found that more obscure phrases, such as "OK, who is reading?" also alert the devices.

Cortana, the Microsoft personal assistant, can be roused when it hears "Montana".

To compile their list, the researchers played episodes of TV series to a range of voice assistants and noted the dialogue that brought them to life.

Professor Dorothea Kolossa at the RUB, who led the study, said: "The devices are intentionally programmed in a somewhat forgiving manner, because they are supposed to be able to understand their humans.

"Therefore, they are more likely to start up once too often rather than not at all."

Professor Thorsten Holz of the Horst Gortz Institute for IT Security, who also worked on the research, warned of a possible privacy problem.

He said snippets of conversation could be analysed by the researchers used to weed out false triggers.

Smartspeakers do not constantly listen to owners' conversations because they should only activate on hearing a wake word. However, a study this year by Northeastern University, Boston, found they can accidentally record conversations up to 19 times a day as a result of false wakes.