

All in a day's work

Helicopter Heroes film dramatic rescue of Westmead Private patient

It was a wing, a prayer and a pair of steady surgeon's hands that saved Westmead Private patient Sarah Blomfield recently, with her dramatic rescue and operation caught on film by the hit British TV reality show *Helicopter Heroes*.

The Barraba teenager was on a school excursion to the Jenolan Caves when she experienced a sudden severe headache and vomiting.

Thanks to the actions of her teachers, Sarah was quickly transferred by ambulance to Oberon and then onto Bathurst Base Hospital where a CT scan revealed blood on the brain.

It was then that British medic Dr Ben Lakin, in Australia filming the Down Under series of *Helicopter Heroes*, sprinted into action - overseeing the medical care of the 14 year old during the emergency NETS flight to Sydney.

For Dr Lakin, dramatic air rescues - winching souls to safety and jumping hospital trolleys in a single bound - is normal for a flying ER doctor who spends his working day transporting seriously injured patients from far-flung corners of the country.

The other hero of the day was Westmead Private Hospital's Neurosurgeon



Dr Mark Dexter, who seamlessly removed the life-threatening anterior venous malformation (AVM) - a tangle of abnormal blood cells that can cause severe damage with a bleed out.

For Sarah's mum, Penny, the quick actions of all the staff and doctors involved is something she will be forever grateful for.

"One minute you think you have it all, your child is perfectly healthy and then you get a phone call from a teacher telling you your child is probably very ill and the closest hospital is miles away. The NETs team, Dr Lakin and Dr Dexter's surgery are why our little girl is here today and we will be forever grateful."

Sarah spent a week in Westmead Private Hospital, where Dr Lakin visited her to see how she was getting on.

For Sarah and her parents it was a lovely reunion and a time to thank Dr Lakin for his efforts in Sarah's transfer. Sarah was discharged home back to Barraba where she will shortly return to school in good health and is looking forward to seeing her friends again. [PH](#)

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