

Hi there!

My name is Dominique. I am a 53 year old slim, fit, active woman; my diet is really good – I'd like to think so ☺ - and I exercise every day at my local friendly gym. I have a full time job and a 22 year old son living at home with me. Work can be a bit stressful and I am trying to manage this as best as possible

30th December 2016 was a hot day in Sydney and I was enjoying the Christmas to New Year short holiday. That morning, I had gone to the gym as usual, did a strength/circuit class, had coffee with a gym buddy and was then at home, reading a book on the lounge under the ceiling fan. Late afternoon, I started having some bad chest pain – as if an elephant was sitting on my chest!!! The pain continued throughout the night, radiating to my right shoulder. I thought “Surely this is not a heart attack, not me, I have none of risk factors and no heart disease in my family. I must have pulled some muscle at the gym”. I felt better the next morning and did a spin class, sweating more than usual, but again, the heat was relentless. I took myself to the medical centre after the gym and the GP ordered some blood test.

By then it was New Year's Eve. 6pm, I was watching the news on TV when the pathology laboratory called me and told me to call an ambulance immediately and go to the hospital: my blood tests showed evidence of significant heart damage (my troponin levels were about 800!).

Ambulance on New Year's Eve, cardiac ward for a few days, with a battery of tests including ECG, ultrasound, and finally an angiogram which revealed a SCAD. I was discharged on the 2nd January with the standard cocktail of drugs (aspirin, blood thinners, beta blockers and statin!!). Everyone close to me – myself included – were baffled by the news. But I am known to like a challenge and I thought that whatever it takes, I'll do it and get better!

Today is Australia Day – so not even 4 weeks after my SCAD - and I am pleased to advise that the cardiologist has now asked me to stop all the medications and to remain on aspirin only. I am very relieved as the side effects were not pleasant. I am back at the gym, with gradual progression of efforts.

My life is back to normal although I am a bit more moderate in my efforts for the time being. I know there is a chance of recurrence, but if it does happen, I know all the signs and will go to the hospital immediately. Any chest pain lasting more than 10 minutes, call 000. I guess my SCAD was relatively minor compared to others, and I feel blessed. If you are on Facebook, look up SCAD, there are a few groups out there, including an Australian one and you will feel less alone! Take care and one step at a time!