

The West Australian



New ground: Japanese surgeon Etsuo Tsuchikane, who directed a revolutionary angioplasty procedure in Perth on Thursday. Picture: Barry Baker

Fast-track heart operation

CATHY O'LEARY

Perth doctors have cleared the blocked artery of a patient which was "set like concrete", using a revolutionary new technique brought to Perth by a Japanese expert.

Japanese cardiologist Etsuo Tsuchikane directed the first-time procedure at the Mount Hospital on Thursday, ahead of the annual scientific meeting of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand being held in Perth this weekend.

Doctors cleared the artery without the need for open-heart surgery, using a special angioplasty technique in which a wire catheter was inserted into the blocked artery — known as a chronic total occlusion — to clear the blockage.

Without the procedure, doctors would have been unable to clear the blood vessel in the catheter theatre and the patient would have been forced to

undergo heart bypass surgery and face a long hospital stay.

Instead, the patient, who is a doctor, was back at work the next day — yesterday.

Dr Tsuchikane, who is from the department of cardiology at Toyohashi Heart Centre, said he welcomed the chance to show his technique to his Australian colleagues.

He said the diet of many Japanese people was now similar to that of Australians, as were their rates of heart disease.

The biggest gathering of heart specialists ever held in Perth is examining the causes, prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease.

The world's leading experts will discuss the use of gene therapy being used to promote heart cell growth after a heart attack, how inflamed blood vessels can cause heart attacks and stroke, and the role of good cholesterol.