

Najee, 27

Adventure enthusiast & husband highlighting the value of access to innovative medical technologies, **ADELAIDE**

Registered conveyancer and business owner, Najee, 27, experienced a life-changing motorcycle accident in 2017 that left him fighting for life and reliant on multiple complex medical interventions.

Four-and-a-half years after the accident, during one of his regular six-month cardiac check-ups, scans detected a leak in Najee's heart. As the months passed, the symptoms escalated, and Najee's health declined.

Doctors initially considered another open-heart surgery for Najee. However, his significantly altered anatomy – including his heart now being positioned on the right side of his chest and the presence of only one remaining lung – meant the risks associated with conventional surgery were extremely high.

Seeking a safer option, Najee's cardiothoracic team explored less invasive approaches and consulted internationally to review potential pathways appropriate for his condition. Following these discussions, a transcatheter procedure was identified as the most suitable next step based on clinical assessment. The treatment helped stabilise Najee's health, and he has since been able to reduce his reliance on certain heart medications under medical supervision.

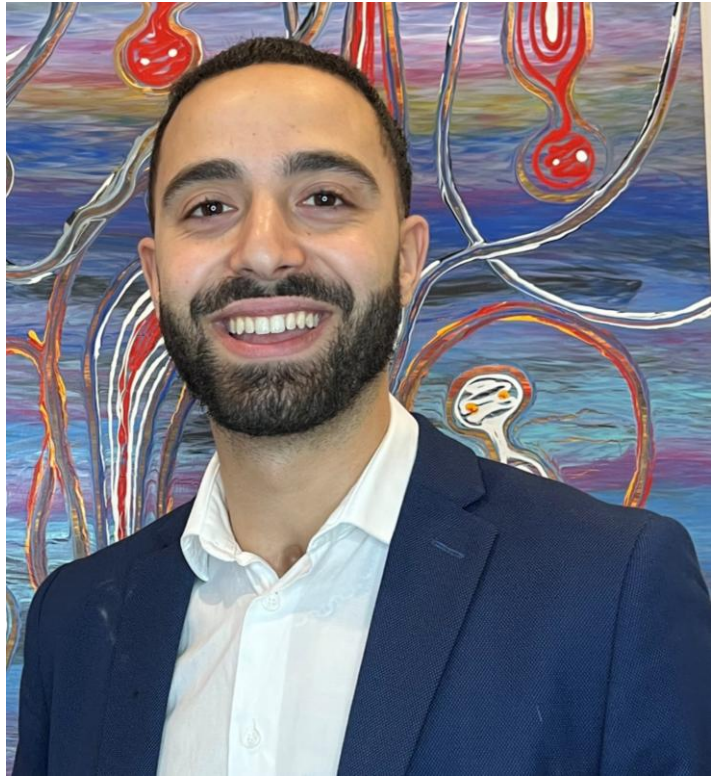
Upon reflection, Najee believes Australians should have timely access to clinically proven, life-saving medical technologies. By sharing his story, he hopes to contribute to broader discussions about access for patients with complex needs. While he feels fortunate that an appropriate solution became available when it did, he recognises that many patients face longer and more uncertain waits for treatment.

This is Najee's story.

On Friday, October 13, 2017, Najee was involved in a motorcycle crash when another driver failed to give way. The accident left him in a coma for more than a month and caused multiple serious injuries – a broken collarbone, displaced right shoulder, fractured ribs, a punctured right lung, leaving him with only one functioning lung.

Thanks to an ambulance driving directly behind him at the time and providing immediate medical care, Najee survived the accident.

Over the ensuing months, he underwent numerous procedures, including open-heart surgery, pulmonary valve repairs, and aortic stent placements to stabilise his condition. However, in 2022, a routine heart check-up revealed a leak that, if untreated, would have required additional open-heart surgery.



"Within a few months, my heart was accelerating to 200 beats per minute while sitting casually. It was like having a heart attack for a minute before suddenly dropping back to a resting rate," Najee said.

After a long, complex medical journey and 17 surgeries, Najee's medical team explored a less invasive option.

"Due to the invasiveness, I was told the chances of surviving another open-heart surgery were less than 50 per cent, and doctors were also unsure whether, even if I did survive, the procedure would relieve my symptoms.

"My surgeon explored the option of using a transcatheter heart valve that could be manufactured specifically to suit my anatomy, allowing my damaged valve to be replaced without the risks associated with open-heart surgery," said Najee.

Following the procedure, Najee has experienced improvements in his day-to-day wellbeing and, under medical guidance, has been able to adjust some of his heart medications.

"Undergoing a first-of-its-kind procedure was daunting. I hope that, in the future, new medical technologies can become available to Australians more quickly, so other patients may not need to go through the same uncertainty," Najee said.

Najee hopes his story encourages policymakers to accelerate access to innovative medical technologies in Australia.

"Delays can have serious consequences. Faster access to new treatments could save lives, reduce trauma, and give patients a chance to recover without undergoing higher-risk procedures.

"This experience has shown me that innovation isn't just about the technology – it's about giving patients a fighting chance," said Najee.

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