Case scenario 1

*Presentation*

Michelle Bell presented to the casualty department of the hospital near her hotel during a recent interstate visit because her first day in the city was marked by bouts of breathlessness and nausea and she was worried about flying home late the following day. During her consultation, she was reassured that apart from a BP of 165/90 mmHg and mild tachycardia there was probably not much to worry about, she should just go to her GP when she returned home if she was still feeling unwell.

As Michelle was leaving the department she suffered another bout of breathlessness, during which she had to sit down. This was witnessed by you, a Registered Nurse in the department, you also noticed that Michelle was suddenly extremely pale. On checking, Michelle’s pulse was 160bpm and irregular.

*History*

Michelle Bell is the 42-year-old CEO of a small company that is in a rapid growth phase, requiring frequent interstate travel, long hours in the office, at her home office and in meeting rooms in across the country. She is divorced, and has two teenaged children who divide their time between Michelle and their father’s homes, fitting in with Michelle’s travel requirements.

Michelle’s hectic life does not include much exercise and unless she is cooking for the children, her diet is dictated by business lunches, airline food and whatever takeaway she can grab on the way home in the evenings. She drinks most days, especially when travelling – usually ‘only 2 or 3 glasses of wine’, 1 at lunch with clients and a couple to unwind in the evening. She is a non-smoker.