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## Diabetes and antenatal milk expressing: publication of the DAME trial results

Anita Moorhead and Della Forster

Despite limited evidence, many midwives, doctors, lactation consultants and breastfeeding counsellors recommend that women with diabetes in pregnancy express and store breast milk in late pregnancy for use after birth to treat neonatal hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar), promote early lactogenesis (milk coming in) and exclusive breast milk feeding. The Diabetes and Antenatal Milk Expressing (DAME) trial was a large NHMRC-funded two-arm, multi-centre, randomised controlled trial exploring the safety and efficacy of antenatal milk expressing for women with diabetes in pregnancy who were at low risk of other complications. The study was undertaken in six maternity study sites in Victoria, Australia, between 2011 and 2015.

We assessed over 6500 women with diabetes in pregnancy for trial eligibility, and approached over 2300 for participation, with a final total of 635 women in the study. Women were randomised at 36 to 37 weeks gestation to usual care, or to twice-daily hand expressing for 10 minutes until birth. Randomisation was stratified by site, parity and diabetes type. The study was powered to detect a 10% difference in the proportion of babies admitted to special or neonatal intensive care (the primary outcome). Secondary outcomes included gestation at birth, proportion of infants receiving exclusive breast milk during their hospital stay related to the birth, infant feeding at three months, and women's views.

We found that babies of women with diabetes in pregnancy who were advised to hand express during pregnancy:

- were no more likely to need admission to neonatal special intensive care: expressing group 15%, comparison group 14%;
- were more likely to receive only breast milk in the first 24 hours after birth: expressing group 69%, comparison group 60%;
- were no more likely to be receiving any breast milk at 3 months: expressing group 83%, comparison group 82%.

Women with diabetes in pregnancy who were taught hand expressing during pregnancy did not give birth any earlier than women who did not express during pregnancy. The average total amount of breast milk expressed by individual women for the whole period of expressing was 5 mLs (median), with a range from 0 to 904 mLs.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Awards



**Heather Wallace**, PhD student at the Judith Lumley Centre, was awarded the Nurses Board of Victoria Legacy Limited 'Marjory Taylor Fellowship'.

The fellowship is in honour of Matron Marjory Taylor (1920 - 2006). Marjory was an outstanding nurse and mentor, and the Director of Nursing at The Geelong Hospital from 1956 to 1981.

This fellowship will cover some of the costs for Heather to attend and present at the International Confederation of Midwives Congress in Toronto in June this year. Her presentation will be on her qualitative research work in Timor-Leste which has focused on reproductive health decision making.

The presentation of the fellowship took place at the Melbourne Town Hall on Friday, 12 May. Prof Angela Taft (one of her PhD supervisors) and Lisa McKenna (Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery) joined the celebrations.

The trial has recently been published in *The Lancet*, who also commissioned a commentary on the DAME trial, highlighting the need for rigorous research questioning clinical practices – especially where a paucity of evidence exists. The publication of the paper created great interest in the media with interviews being conducted with Professor Della Forster for television, news stories, and coverage in the online and print media. We wrote a discussion piece for the online news website site *The Conversation* exploring the issue of antenatal expressing for pregnant women more broadly.



**Della Forster, Anite Moorhead, Lisa Amir, & Jan Nicholson**

We have presented the study results at national and local conferences, and research seminars. In June/July 2017 the DAME results are being presented at two international conferences in Toronto, Canada by members of the research team. One of these presentations is as an invited keynote speech.

The research team continue to receive requests for information about the trial from around the globe and publication of the results paper will be very helpful for clinicians from many health disciplines and the women they care for.

Anita is a PhD student on the project, and has started interviewing women from the study about their views on expressing while pregnant. Other data analysis is underway.

Forster DA, Moorhead AM, Jacobs SE, Davis PG, Walker SP, McEgan KM, Opie GF, Donath SM, Gold L, McNamara C, Aylward A, East C, Ford R, Amir LH. Advising women with diabetes in pregnancy to express breastmilk in late pregnancy (Diabetes and Antenatal Milk Expressing [DAME]): a multicentre, unblinded, randomised controlled trial. *Lancet*; 389(10085):2204-13.

## Staff news

Welcome to the following staff:

**Zoe Marchant** who has taken up the position of Administration Officer at the School of Nursing & Midwifery (SNM). She will be working at JLC 3 days a week and at SNM 2 days a week. Zoe has 12 years of experience in administration and worked at Melbourne Water prior to La Trobe.

**Pam McCalman, an Aboriginal midwife,** joins the Women's Journey team as a research officer. She will be working at JLC on the project 2 days a week.

**Dr Cath Chamberlain** who commenced in February as a Research Fellow. Cath is a former collaborator of JLC who worked with Judith Lumley on early reviews for the Cochrane collaboration, as well as with other staff members. She will commence as an NHMRC Early Career Fellow focusing on indigenous midwifery.

**Win Hnin Yee,** who completed a Masters of Public Health in 2016, and is volunteering at JLC for 2 days a week. Win is a qualified GP and is keen to gain research experience within the Centre.

Sadly, **Olga Tsironis** who has been providing support as the Program Administration Officer for the TCPP over the past 3 years left JLC in June. She will be missed greatly.

**Prof Angela Taft** has stepped down as Director after three years, to refocus on her program of research and reduce her hours and workload. She has great confidence that **Professor Jan Nicholson**, who has taken her place, will ensure JLC's continued reputation for excellence going forward.



The launch of the paper was celebrated by the researchers, and many interested people at the Royal Women's Hospital on Friday 2 June 2017

## Speech by the Judith Lumley Centre Director, Jan Nicholson, at the launch



*"Back in 2010 when this grant was submitted to the NHMRC:*

- 1200 clinical research applications were submitted,
- 230 were funded and
- only 3 of these were in reproductive/ maternal health.

*Just getting the funding for DAME was a significant achievement.*

*The importance of the DAME study is reflected in today's paper launch, with the main trial results published in The Lancet. The paper was accompanied by an independent commentary piece and was also highlighted in the editor's column. For those of you who are not aware of The Lancet, it is the world's second oldest and second most important general medical journal. First published back in 1823 it publishes articles that significantly advance medical science and practice. The Lancet prides itself on stringently ensuring the scientific merit and clinical relevance of its content.*

*To give you some sense of the prestige attached to The Lancet, I want to mention a metric called the impact factor. Journal impact factors are determined based on the extent to which a journal's articles are cited by others, and in that way, are being seen to be informing and shaping the science of the future. In the public health/ health services fields of research that we work in, I view a journal to be high quality if it has an impact factor of around 5 or more. The very top journals internationally have impact factors of 10 or greater. The Lancet has an Impact Factor of 44. I didn't know that IFs went that high.*

*So this is rarified space and an enormous credit to the vision and skills of the DAME team. On behalf of La Trobe University and the Judith Lumley Centre, I want to recognise and congratulate the leadership of senior investigators Professors Della Forster and Lisa Amir and trial coordinator and JLC PhD student Anita Moorhead.*

*To be published in the Lancet, their work had to be internationally innovative and conducted with absolute rigour. La Trobe has good reason to be very proud of their achievement."*

## New Higher Degree students



**Charlie Smithson** commenced at JLC in February and her PhD project is titled "ABLE: Asking women about disabilities" and is

investigating the prevalence, identification and experiences of women with disabilities that use maternity services at the Royal Women's Hospital.



**Kerryn O'Rourke** is the Principal Program officer for Health Equity at Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth). Kerryn's PhD is focusing on researching

the work of the organisation Birth for Humankind where she is also a volunteer board member.



**Robyn Matthews** is a midwife at the Royal Women's Hospital and enrolled in a Masters of Applied Science by Research. Her thesis is

*'EXPerT- Exploring midwives' and nurses' perceptions of 'expertise' at the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne'.*



**Rebecca Hyde** is a midwife at the Royal Women's Hospital and enrolled in a Masters of Applied Science by Research looking at the topic *'Your Views Matter:*

*Exploring the experiences, satisfaction and needs of parents of infants in Newborn Intensive and Special Care at the Royal Women's Hospital'.*

## PhD Celebrations



**Kristina Edvardsson, Leesa Hooker, Angela Taft, Ingrid Wilson, Sonia Reisenhofer, Lyn Watson**

JLC has had many PhD celebrations over the past few months.

Congratulations to Dr Ingrid Wilson and Dr Sonia Reisenhofer who recently graduated. Ingrid's thesis is titled 'Fearing the "changed" man: Women's experience of alcohol-related intimate partner violence. A constructivist grounded theory study'. She was supervised by Prof Angela Taft and Dr Kathryn Graham (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Ontario, Canada). Sonia's thesis is titled 'Understanding abused women's needs, identifying their goals and using the "Stages of Change" to enhance health professionals' care for women experiencing intimate partner violence. Sonia's supervisors were Prof Angela Taft, Dr Mary-Ann Davey, Dr Lyn Watson and Prof Kelsey Hegarty (University of Melbourne).

Congratulations also to Miranda Buck, Fetene Belihu Berhanu and Shannon Bennetts who recently passed their PhDs and to Dr Kayli Wild who was awarded a prestigious ARC DECRA (see below) to continue her work in Timor Leste. Miranda's thesis is titled 'Nipple pain in early motherhood', and was supervised by Prof Lisa Amir and Dr Karalyn McDonald (Monash University). Fetene's thesis is titled 'Perinatal and obstetric health outcomes of Eastern African immigrant women in Victoria, Australia: a population based study' and was supervised by Prof Rhonda Small and Dr Mary-Ann Davey. Shannon completed her PhD through The University of Melbourne and was supervised by Dr Fiona Mensah (Murdoch Childrens Research Institute), Dr Liz Westrupp, Dr Naomi Hackworth and Prof Sheena Reilly (Griffith University). Her thesis is titled 'Parent-reported and directly measured child language and parenting behaviours: Agreement, socio-demographic factors and parent perspectives'.

Congratulations Ingrid, Sonia, Miranda, Fetene and Shannon on your wonderful achievements!

## **EHLS at School Staff Update**

In June 2017 **Shannon Bennetts** took over the co-ordination of EHLS at School. Shannon was involved in the original Early Home Learning Study (EHLS) from 2010 to 2014. This role included training research assistants to conduct the home visits, and managing the collection of parent-reported and direct observational data. She is an Associate Investigator on the current NHMRC Partnership Grant. Shannon recently completed her PhD at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, investigating the measurement of parenting behaviours and children's language development, using data collected from the original EHLS.

**Clair Cullen** left the EHLS at School team in June 2017 to move to the United States. Clair will continue to support the technical requirements of the EHLS at School study on an ongoing casual basis.



We welcome a new granddaughter for Lisa Amir, Frances (Frankie) Helen Kay-Amir, born 11 January 2017.



Avery



Edward

We welcome two new grandchildren for Angela Taft, Edward Goorjian-Taft born on Jan 20th 2017 and Avery Ellen Holben, born May 26<sup>th</sup> 2017

Congratulations to Anna Fragkoudi, who recently graduated with a Masters of Applied Science. Her thesis was titled 'Childbirth preparation and women's experience of labour and birth'. Anna explored whether childbirth education focused on a hormonal model of labour has a positive impact on how women anticipate and experience labour and birth. She was supervised by Professor Rhonda Small, Dr Michelle Newton and Mr Lester Jones.



Michelle Newton and Anna Fragkoudi

## **Visitors at JLC**

### **Leonie Versteegh**

My name is Leonie Versteegh and I am a medical student at Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. This semester I had the opportunity to come to the Judith Lumley Centre (JLC) and write my degree project. I have been working with Leesa Hooker on seeking patterns among abused and non-abused postpartum women.

Now that the semester is coming to an end, I can only look back at my stay at the JLC with joy. When I arrived in January, a bit confused but full of expectations, I received a very warm welcome (and I'm not talking about the weather). What stands out at JLC is the attitude among the co-workers; everything from singing to baking is enjoyed together. Leesa has been the best supervisor I could have asked for and I have learnt so much.

I am truly happy with the months I have spent here, I have not only learnt about research, the staff here have showed me how fun and friendly the atmosphere at work can be. Isn't that what is most important in the end?

### **Lucy Lewis**

Dr Lucy Lewis, a Midwifery Research Fellow with a joint appointment between King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women (KEMH) and Curtin University in Western Australia, visited JLC on 26 – 28 April. Dr Lewis works closely with Professor Yvonne Hauck, who leads the midwifery research for both KEMH and Curtin University. She presented a snapshot of her research activities to JLC staff on 26 April, focusing on an investigation of the effect of various protocols for cessation of intravenous oxytocin post birth on postpartum haemorrhage in spontaneous vaginal delivery following induction of labour with oxytocin, and an overview of a water birth program at KEMH.

## Conference presentations

15<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Public Health,  
Melbourne

**Angela Taft, Ingrid Wilson, Marcos Signorelli, Beatriz Ayala, Heather Wallace, Kristina Edvardsson and Heather Grimes** presented at The World Congress on Public Health (WCPH). It is held every 2 - 4 years and attracts between 2,000-4,000 delegates.

It serves as an international forum to exchange knowledge and experiences on key public health issues, contributing towards protecting and promoting public health at a national and global level.

**PSANZ**, Canberra

**Della Forster and Kristina Edvardsson** presented at The Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand annual congress, which aims to provide an opportunity for members to broaden their perspectives of perinatology and stimulate research activities aimed at improving perinatal care.

**Child Language CRE conference**, Melbourne

**Elizabeth Westrupp** presented at The Centre of Research Excellence in Child Language, which is an international collaboration of child language experts. The fifth and final Child Language Conference was held in April, The Topic was: *Next steps for child language: Looking back to look forward.*

**Early Intervention Forum**, Melbourne

**Ingrid Wilson** presented at Melbourne Research Alliance to End Violence (MAEVe). The forum was *Early Intervention: Changing the trajectory to prevent violence against women and their children.*

The aim of the day was to bring together stakeholders to discuss key issues from different perspectives and experiences, with a view to learning from each other and informing research, policy, practice, education and training.

## Victorian Budget Briefing

Lael Ridgeway



**Belinda Clarke (ANMF), Jenny Mikakos (Minister for Families and Children), Lisa Fitzpatrick (ANMF Vic Secretary) and Lael Ridgeway (JLC)**

The Victorian State Government launched the Early Childhood Reform Plan as part of the 2017/18 budget announcement on 2 May, 2017.

The plan includes an \$81 million investment, to expand and strengthen Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and parenting services in Victoria.

Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos, stated:

*'As part of this package, the Enhanced MCH service will be progressively expanded to support families with children from birth to three years of age who need extra support. This expansion will mean more families get additional support, for longer.*

*The expansion will be guided by the work currently underway to revise and strengthen the Enhanced MCH Clinical Guidelines.*

*To support the roll out of these initiatives, funding will be provided for professional development for all MCH nurses. Funding will also support initiatives to recruit new nurses to the MCH Service to support the service expansion.'*

## JLC partners with National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) to address violence against women

Dr Kayli Wild, Prof Angela Taft and Prof Susan McDonald have been collaborating with the Department of Midwifery at the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) to inform a health sector response to violence against women in Timor-Leste. The initial research was supported by a La Trobe University Research Focus Area Transforming Human Societies (THS) grant, and was conducted with midwives across three districts. The work culminated in a national launch of the findings and interest by UNTL in integrating violence into their nursing and midwifery undergraduate curriculums.

## Grants

**Associate Prof Lisa Amir** was awarded a two year NHMRC TRIP (Translating Research Into Practice) Fellowship

**Prof Angela Taft** and the Big Bid investigators were awarded \$50,000 from VicHealth to assist with running a pre-conference workshop at the Global Alcohol Policy Conference in October 2017.

**Prof Della Forster** was awarded \$52,000 from the RWH Foundation to assist in the conduct of the Your Views Matter study.

## In the media

The following are only some of the media appearances of staff at the Centre:

TCPP Families at Work Program, led by **Mandi Cooklin**, was featured in a 2-page spread of The Age (pages 2-3). The article was in response to a piece Mandi wrote for an online academic site "The Child and Family Blog", run by internationally recognised researchers from Princeton University and University of Cambridge, and funded by the Jacobs Foundation. Congratulations Mandi  
<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/warmer-consistent-and-less-irritable-why-good-work-conditions-matter-for-dads-20170110-gtozqz>

*Advising women with diabetes in pregnancy to express breastmilk in late pregnancy (Diabetes and Antenatal Milk Expressing [DAME]: a multi centre, unblinded randomised controlled trial* was published in The Lancet on the 2nd June 2017.

Kayli explained that "living in Timor-Leste and being based at the National University allowed for close collaborative relationships to be developed between La Trobe and UNTL which will continue into the future."



**Midwives stand against violence at the Timor-Leste Midwives Association Conference**



**Improving safety for women and children in Timor-Leste**

Kayli has been awarded a prestigious Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Research Award to continue this program of research over the next three years. The research will explore the needs of women who have experienced violence and what factors support leadership on the issue, from the clinic to national policy and health system responses. JLC and the School of Nursing and Midwifery at La Trobe will continue to support the aspirations of UNTL in developing their curriculum on violence and health, and will host two senior midwifery lecturers from UNTL later in the year while they work on developing their own learning modules. "So many women and children experience family violence in Timor-Leste. Embedding a curriculum so health providers know how to identify the signs of abuse, respond with empathy and know how to get help is one of the most important and sustainable ways to reach a large number of women and children in remote areas of the country" said Kayli.

## Lunchtime seminars

We hold lunchtime seminars on the **first Wednesday of every month** from February to December, from 12.30 - 1.30 pm.

These seminars showcase the work of our colleagues as well as national and international academics and researchers visiting the Centre. Please refer to our website at [www.latrobe.edu.au/jlc/news-events/seminars-and-clubs](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/jlc/news-events/seminars-and-clubs)



Midwives play an important role when women present with signs of abuse

## The Judith Lumley Scholarship

The College of Science, Health and Engineering established the Judith Lumley Scholarship in recognition of the contributions that Judith Lumley, founding director of Centre for the Study of Mothers' and Children's Health and a world renowned researcher in maternal health, made to the College and the community more broadly. The Judith Lumley scholarship is an esteem award for a high achieving HDR scholarship holder at the Judith Lumley Centre. There is only one holder of the Judith Lumley Scholarship at any time.

In May, Charlie Smithson was awarded the Judith Lumley scholarship by Prof Jan Nicholson. Her PhD project is titled "ABLE: Asking women aBout disabiliTies" and is investigating the prevalence, identification and experiences of women with disabilities that use maternity services at the Royal Women's hospital. Charlie is supervised by Prof Helen McLachlan, Prof Della Forster, Dr Michelle Newton and Prof Lisa McKenna. Congratulations Charlie!



Della Forster, Helen McLachlan, Charlie Smithson and Jan Nicholson

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for mother, infant and family health research

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