

## Diabetes & the Antenatal Milk Expressing trial

Lisa Amir

Expressing milk during pregnancy was encouraged decades ago as it seemed to reduce nipple pain and increase duration of breastfeeding.<sup>1</sup> However the safety and efficacy has not been tested, and the practice raises many questions: Does expressing in late pregnancy stimulate labour? Will expressing increase a mother's milk supply?

Diabetes occurs in 8% of pregnancies and women with diabetes are considered to be at high risk of perinatal complications.

Many maternity providers have started to again encourage these 'high risk' women to express colostrum before birth to have breast milk available should the infant need supplementary feeding to treat hypoglycaemia.

A team of collaborators from the Mercy Hospital for Women and the Royal Women's Hospital have joined Della Forster and Lisa Amir from MCHR to conduct the first randomised controlled trial of antenatal expressing to establish the safety and efficacy of this practice. We will be collecting a number of outcome measures, including duration of pregnancy, infant admissions to the Special Care or Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, the exclusive use of breast milk during the hospital stay after the birth and at three months of age. We will be assessing women's perception of the timing of lactogenesis II, also known as 'milk coming-in'.

DAME is a four-year NHMRC funded project. Anita Moorhead has been appointed as project co-ordinator, and a research midwife will be situated at each

hospital. Recruitment began at the Royal Women's Hospital in June 2011, and will commence at the Mercy Hospital soon.

DAME investigators are:

Della Forster<sup>1,2</sup>, Sue Jacobs<sup>1,2</sup>, Lisa Amir<sup>1</sup>, Peter Davis<sup>2</sup>, Susan Walker<sup>3</sup>, Kerri McEgan<sup>3</sup>, Gillian Opie<sup>3</sup>, Susan Donath<sup>4</sup>, Lisa Gold<sup>5</sup>, Anita Moorhead<sup>2</sup>, Rachael Ford<sup>2</sup>, Cath McNamara<sup>3</sup> and Amanda Aylward<sup>2</sup> are Associate Investigators.

1. Mother & Child Health Research, La Trobe University
2. Royal Women's Hospital
3. Mercy Hospital for Women
4. Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics Unit, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute
5. School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University



## Evaluation of Victorian Homebirthing Pilots

Heather McKay

In most developed countries, including Australia, women usually give birth in hospital. There are some exceptions to this generalisation, for example, in the Netherlands about one third of women birth at home. However, significant international debate concerning the safety of homebirth continues. Following consultation with key stakeholder groups, the Department of Health in Victoria identified that there was an opportunity to provide women with greater choice through the introduction of a homebirth model of maternity care. This led to the establishment of a homebirthing pilot

program offering midwife-led homebirths through two Melbourne metropolitan hospitals – Sunshine Hospital and Casey Hospital.

An evaluation of Melbourne's two publicly funded midwife-led homebirthing pilot programs is being conducted by Helen McLachlan and a team of researchers. At each pilot/program site (hospital) there will be:

- a review of relevant documentation;
- an economic evaluation;
- a review of medical record data;
- consultation meetings with key stakeholders; and
- surveys of medical staff, midwives, and mothers who participated in the homebirth pilot program.

MCHR is conducting the evaluation on behalf of the Hospital and Health Service Performance Division, Department of Health (Victoria). It will inform government and assist in the development of policy advice about future implementation and possible expansion of the homebirth options throughout Victoria. This project commenced in March 2011 and is expected

to run for 13 months. Project co-ordinator, Heather McKay, will be assisted by Research Assistant, Felicity Lawton.

The team comprises the following investigators:

Helen McLachlan<sup>1,2</sup>, Della Forster<sup>1,3</sup>, Rhonda Small<sup>1</sup>, Mary-Ann Davey<sup>1,4</sup>, Fiona Cullinane<sup>3</sup>, Ya-Seng (Arthur) Hsueh<sup>1</sup>, Michelle Newton<sup>1,2</sup> and Heather McKay<sup>1</sup>. Felicity Lawton<sup>1</sup> is an Associate Investigator.

1. Mother & Child Health Research, La Trobe University
2. School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University
3. The Royal Women's Hospital
4. Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity

Felicity Lawton and Heather McKay



# Navigating Complexity – one day research forum for COMPASS

Jo Rayner

## BACKGROUND

COMPASS, a National Health and Medical Research Council Capacity Building Grant in Population Health Research, focuses on building public health research capacity to answer complex questions in complex settings among complex populations across three research groups: Mother & Child Health Research (MCHR) at La Trobe University; the Primary Care Research Unit (PCRU) in the Department of General Practice, the University of Melbourne; and the Healthy Mothers Healthy Families (HMHF) research group at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute. COMPASS researchers have a strong record of tackling complex research, including in population groups which are often excluded – Indigenous and immigrant populations – and addressing difficult questions. The COMPASS program of research addresses a set of complex problems ranging from intimate partner violence, to preterm birth and maternal depression. These problems come to light in primary care, hospitals or communities. They require complex interventions, developed from a broad research base, to be implemented in different settings with diverse designs, from qualitative research to community trials. Multi-level interventions to change policy or practice, and health service and health economic evaluations are also important aspects of this. The COMPASS research program is building capacity through participation in multi-disciplinary research.

On 25 November 2010 the COMPASS group held a one-day research Forum - *Navigating Complexity* – in the historic Junior Common Room in the beautiful surrounds of Queens College, the University of Melbourne. The Forum was educative and informative and showcased papers written by COMPASS team members to stimulate discussion about complexity in public health research. COMPASS aims to emphasise the importance of research transfer and research translation through seminars on public health advocacy, with content and policy components, led by Team Investigators and supported by the Lead Investigator group. As part of this aim COMPASS has involved the Team Investigator group in the writing and publication of a journal special edition on 'Navigating Complexity in Public Health Research'. The one-day Forum was organised by a sub-group of the Team Investigators (Jo Rayner, Mary-Ann Davey, Fiona Bruinsma and Tanya Koolmatrjie), to provide an opportunity to highlight some of the papers being written for the special issue, to an audience of public health researchers and practitioners.

## THE FORUM

Despite being an unseasonably wet day, the Forum was attended by over sixty public health researchers from around Australia. The Forum was commenced with a welcome to country by Aunty Doreen Wandin, a Wurrunddjeri elder. The Forum was introduced by COMPASS Lead Investigators Rhonda Small (MCHR) and Stephanie Brown (HMHF). The other Lead Investigators, Jane Gunn (PCRU), Karen Willis and Jeanne Daly chaired paper presentation sessions throughout the day. The format for the day involved presentation of individual papers by the authors followed by a brief commentary on the paper from an invited discussant and then opportunity for audience questions. The discussants were selected for their acknowledged expertise in the area that the paper addressed and for the important contribution they might make to the Forum. Each was sent a draft copy of the paper they were to comment on. The audience comprised a group of invited public health researchers, many from interstate and from various disciplines with a majority of attendees from other NHMRC Capacity Building teams.

Nine papers were presented over the day promoting much discussion and debate. Each paper addressed an aspect of complexity associated with undertaking public health research:

Presenter:  
Jane Yelland



Presenter:  
Fiona Bruinsma





- **Ethical complexities of screening in intervention research: the case of depression and intimate partner violence** Vicki Palmer (PCRU), Jane Yelland (HMHF) and Angela Taft with discussant John Furler from the Primary Care Research Unit, University of Melbourne;
- **Maternal bodies and medication: risk perception and decision-making of pregnant and breastfeeding women** Karalyn McDonald, Lisa Amir and Mary-Ann Davey with discussant Kay Stewart from Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences, Monash University;
- **The power of social connection and support in improving health: lessons from social support interventions with childbearing women** Rhonda Small, Angela Taft and Stephanie Brown (HMHF) with discussant Heather Rowe from the Centre for Women's Health, Gender and Society, University of Melbourne;
- **Looking back in time; conducting a study of the long-term effects of hormone treatment of adolescent tall girls** Fiona Bruinsma, Jo Rayner and Alison Venn (Menzies Research Institute) with discussant Lin Fritschi from the Western Australian Institute of Medical Research, University of Western Australia;
- **Finding my ground in public health research: lessons from my grandmother's kitchen** Tanya Koolmatrerie (HMHF) with discussant Margot Cargo from the School of Health Sciences, University of South Australia;

- **Exploring implementation and sustainability of models of care: can theory help?** Della Forster, Helen McLachlan, Karen Willis (University of Tasmania) and Michelle Newton (School of Nursing & Midwifery, La Trobe University) with discussant Therese Cotter, from Barwon Health;
- **Challenges of rigour in qualitative research: experiences from the field** Mridula Bandyopadhyay and Jeanne Daly with discussant Priscilla Pyett from the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University;
- **Modelling data complexity: comparison of a typology approach with factor analysis using structural equation modelling** Lyn Watson, Paul Agius, Angela Taft, Jane Gunn (PCRU) and Mary-Ann Davey with discussant Damien Jolley from Monash Institute of Health Services, Monash University;
- **Economic evaluation, complex public health interventions and how to make cost-effective public health policies?** Arthur Hseuh and Lisa Gold (Deakin University) with discussant Paula Lorgelly from the School of Business and Economics, Monash University.

The final session was a panel discussion and summing up of the day with audience participation. The invited panellists: Professor Alison Venn from Menzies Research Institute, University of Tasmania; Professor Debbie Sharp from the Academic Unit of Primary Health Care, University of Bristol; and Dr Yin Paradies from the McCaughey Centre, University of Melbourne provided a different disciplinary expertise and perspective. Over a celebratory glass of bubbly, participants, presenters and discussants alike pronounced the day an overwhelming success.



Audience participation

Presenter:  
Della Forster



Presenter:  
Tanya Koolmatrerie



## Grants

Congratulations to the following staff for their recently awarded grants:

*Evaluation of Victorian homebirthing pilots: service impact of homebirthing services.*

The project is being conducted by MCHR, for the Hospital and Health Service Performance Division, Department of Health (Victoria). Investigators are listed in the accompanying article on Page one.

*SUMMIT: Supporting Mothers More: Infant feeding Trial.* Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2011-2014, \$648,313. Investigators: **Helen McLachlan, Della Forster, Lisa Amir, Rhonda Small, Meabh Cullinane.**

*Revision of Victorian Breastfeeding Guidelines.* Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2011. In partnership with Royal Women's Hospital, led by Anita Moorhead, RWH and **Lisa Amir, MCHR.**

## Graduation

**Melissa Hobbs** graduated with her PhD in March 2011. Her PhD thesis was entitled *The Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) rescheduled: Knowledge, attitudes and experiences of women in Australia.* She was supervised by **Angela Taft** and **Lisa Amir.**



Lisa Amir, Melissa Hobbs, Angela Taft

## Congratulations

Congratulations to **Helen McLachlan** on her appointment as Associate Professor; **Meabh Cullinane** who has been appointed as project co-ordinator of the new *SUMMIT* trial; and **Lisa Amir** for her La Trobe University Excellence in Research Award.

## Welcome

To **Heather McKay** and **Felicity Lawson** who are both working on the *Evaluation of Victorian Homebirthing Pilots*, and to PhD students **Kristina Edvardsson** and **Natasha Maharaj.** Kristina, of Umeå University, Sweden, is spending 2011 working on her PhD on the implementation of a child health promotion programme, at MCHR. Natasha is completing her PhD thesis on motherhood, culture and identity of Indian immigrant women in Melbourne and is supervised by **Mridula Bandyopadhyay** and **Jo Rayner.**

## Farewell

Farewell to **Melissa Hobbs** who has moved interstate and to **Fiona Bruinsma** who after many years at MCHR has left to take up an exciting new role with the Cancer Council Victoria. Melissa will remain an Associate and Fiona an Honorary of MCHR.

The COSMOS trial farewellled midwife researchers Carmel Jeffers, Di Fahy, Kate Dawson, Cath Jamieson, Kelly Langford, Fiona McLardie-Hore, Elvira Griffith, Carly Feben and Charlie Benzie.

## Visits

**Audrey Saftlas**, Professor of the Department of Epidemiology, College of Public Health, University of Iowa, visited MCHR for two weeks in May. During her visit Audrey presented a short course in perinatal epidemiology and several other seminars on topics including domestic violence and successful grant writing. Audrey has been appointed as an Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology at La Trobe University and will visit annually.



Professor Audrey Saftlas

**Lester Jones**, from the Department of Physiotherapy, La Trobe University, elected to spend six months (January - June) with MCHR as part of the Faculty of Health Sciences new Research Residency scheme. During his time Lester has shared his knowledge about pain mechanisms, assessment and treatment with other MCHR researchers.



Lester Jones

**Katherine Carroll**, a medical sociologist with interests in donor human milk and qualitative research methods, visited MCHR for two weeks in May and June. She is based at the Centre for Health Communication, University of Technology Sydney, and has just been awarded an Honorary position at the Centre.

## Recent Publications

**Bandyopadhyay M, Small R, Davey MA, Oats J, Forster D, Aylward A.** Lived experience of gestational diabetes mellitus among immigrant South Asian women in Australia. *Aust N Z J Obstet Gynaecol* 2011; (Early view access 15 June 2011)

**Rayner J, Willis K, Pirota M.** What's in a name? Integrative medicine or simply good medical practice? *Fam Pract* 2011; (Advanced access 7 June 2011)

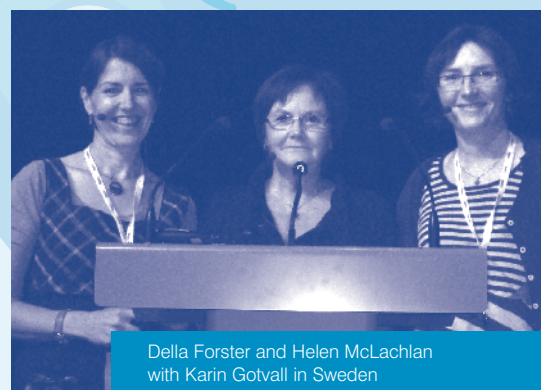
**Rayner J, Willis K, Burgess R.** Women's use of complementary and alternative medicine for fertility enhancement: A review of the literature. *J Altern Complement Med* 2011; 17(8):1-6

## International Presentations

**Touran Shafiei** presented findings from her PhD on maternal emotional wellbeing and use of health services after birth among immigrant women in Australia at the 4th International Congress on Women's Mental Health, Madrid Spain, March 2011.

**Mridula Bandyopadhyay** presented a poster on South Asian Women's experiences of living with gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) at the 6th International Symposium on Diabetes and Pregnancy, Salzburg Austria, March 2011.

**Della Forster** and **Helen McLachlan** presented the findings of COSMOS and of the WAVE Evaluation at a conference celebrating the 300th anniversary of midwifery education in Sweden and 125 years of the Swedish Midwives Association, Stockholm Sweden, June 2011.



Della Forster and Helen McLachlan with Karin Gotvall in Sweden

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