

2006
ANNUAL REPORT

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

MCHR is a multidisciplinary research centre which aims to:

- undertake and interpret research on mothers' and children's health;
- contribute to policy development;
- provide advice and resources to researchers in related fields;
- be involved in postgraduate and continuing education.

Funds

Funds received from the sources listed here totalled: \$1,478,578

The contributions from all granting bodies are gratefully acknowledged.

La Trobe University

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

Program Grant (Core Budget)	\$100,000
Large Research Project Support Grant (SRM)	\$3,923

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Operating budget and supervision of students	\$184,390
Research Training Schemes	\$63,900
Postgraduate Support Grants	\$3,000
Faculty Enhancement Grant	\$2,160
Faculty Research Grants	\$29,600

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

Program Grant (Core Budget)	\$100,000
Public Health Research Fellowship (Dr A Taft)	\$100,000

Australian Government

NATIONAL HEALTH & MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

MOSAIC: Mothers' Advocates in the Community Intervention Trial	\$120,736
Career Development Award (Dr R Small)	\$89,295
Maternal Health Study project (Dr S Brown)	\$78,576
Research Fellowship (Dr L Amir)	\$40,132
PhD Scholarship (J Rayner)	\$26,817
PhD Scholarship (L Watson)	\$21,231
Women and Babies Wellbeing: Action through trials collaboration (University of Adelaide)	\$21,617

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Research Infrastructure Block Grant	\$70,344
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AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

Industry Partner Grant - Over the Counter Contraception	\$56,922
Collaboration - Shering Pharmaceuticals	\$20,000

Victorian Government

Department for Victorian Communities - Community Support Fund (MOSAIC)	\$242,550
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Other Project Grants

ANZ TRUSTEES

Materials for phase 2 follow-up in the Maternal Health Study	\$15,235
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WILLIAM BUCKLAND TRUST PROJECT GRANT (Maternal Health Study)

Resources for health professionals (Maternal Health Study)	\$25,000
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DIAMOND CONSORTIUM (University of Melbourne)

The experience of depression after birth and views about primary care services among Persian-speaking women in Melbourne	\$7,475
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Editorial Services

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

Editorial Services for Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health	\$9,091
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AUSTRALIAN EPIDEMIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Editorial Services for Australian Epidemiologist Journal	\$1,950
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Other Revenue

Courses, reports sales, other activities & interest	\$44,540
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Director's report

2006 at MCHR began with discussions about research funding, or more specifically, whether we should apply for a NHMRC Capacity-Building in Population Health Research Grant. When we last applied we had received positive comments on our program of research but a firm statement that we did not understand capacity-building. Perhaps it was this refusal which goaded us into the series of discussions which led to a much stronger application - and the award of funding. The process enabled us to strengthen MCHR's ten year links with Dr Christine MacArthur, Professor of Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology at the University of Birmingham, who will be a visiting lead applicant on the Capacity Building Grant. Other MCHR lead applicants are Stephanie Brown, Rhonda Small and Jeanne Daly, together with Professor Jane Gunn, from the Primary Care Research Unit at the University of Melbourne.

Two grant applications, led by Stephanie Brown, with a focus on maternity care and maternal health were also successful, as was a collaborative application from the Royal Women's Hospital, the La Trobe School of Nursing and Midwifery and MCHR, for a randomised controlled trial of 'caseload midwifery' to be offered to women at low risk of medical complications. This trial will facilitate our continuing collaborations with Professor Ulla Waldenström from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, and Professor Leah Albers from the University of New Mexico.

During 2006 a group of postdoctoral staff and some doctoral students close to submitting their theses, developed a strong research collaboration around postnatal care in Victorian hospitals with input from a range of interested parties, to identify the strengths, weaknesses and problems in this area. Four papers have been published so far with sustained interest in the findings. The implications for practice and research are substantial.

We have retained strong international links with the Canadian Perinatal Surveillance System, the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit in Britain, and widespread collaborations on maternal and perinatal care and analysis (ROAM, PREBIC, CHIMICA, and EURO_PERISTAT), involving groups in Canada, US and Scandinavia, China and the European Union. These links also benefit our work with immigrant and Indigenous women.

The *PRISM* trial's main paper, published in *BMC Public Health* at the beginning of 2006 received a Biomed Central Research Award in Medicine at the end of the year. We were particularly pleased since the award had been made across all 170+ BMC journals with our pleasure heightened when recalling that the paper had been rejected immediately - without review - by one leading journal, and it then spent 18 months with another leading journal and multiple reviews before being rejected. We are very grateful for the efforts of the participating communities in making the trial happen.

Stephanie Brown and Jane Yelland took up positions at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute in 2007, with Ellie McDonald, Sue Perlen, Maggie Flood, Liesje Toomey and Hannah Woolhouse providing research support. We send our warm congratulations and best wishes for the future.

Last, and far from least, we moved MCHR from its lovely old building in Carlton to Little Lonsdale St in the city. Thanks to Paul Toomey's planning and staff teamwork, this was easier than we expected and the extra space is definitely a bonus.

Judith Lumley



Research program

The primary research focus of MCHR is in the following areas:

- Health services: pregnancy and birth
- Perinatal and child outcomes
- Cross-cultural and Indigenous issues
- Longer term health outcomes of reproduction

The criteria for choosing specific topics is that they are all major public health issues in terms of burden of disease, the implications for women and their families and the resource implications of the condition for health services or for society as a whole. MCHR has a strong interest in health services research, and builds on observational studies to design and implement intervention studies in hospitals, primary care and community settings. This involves working with health service managers, caregivers, community organisations and local councils to implement and evaluate interventions. Techniques of evaluation include health outcome assessment and process and impact measures, making use of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

A major focus of a number of MCHR projects is on the maternal sequelae of reproductive events, in particular antecedents of preterm birth and physical and psychological disorders initiated or aggravated by pregnancy, labour or birth. Studies addressing these issues include use of routinely collected data and record linkage, observational surveys and interview studies, cohort studies and randomised trials with long term follow-up of participants. Another focus of MCHR work is the health and childbearing experience of indigenous women and women of linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the development of culturally relevant research methods and approaches.

HEALTH SERVICES: PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

Victorian Survey of Recent Mothers 2000

Stephanie Brown, Fiona Bruinsma, Mary-Ann Davey and Judith Lumley

The Victorian Survey of Recent Mothers 2000 was commissioned by the Victorian Department of Human Services to inform the continuing development of the Maternity Services Program. The survey was mailed to all Victorian women who gave birth in two weeks in September 1999. 1616 women took part in the survey, a response fraction of 67%. In general, results for private maternity care were more favourable than for public models of care. Women attending public hospital antenatal clinics were the least likely to be very happy with their care. Women participating in shared antenatal care gave more positive feedback about this model of care compared with the results of the previous survey conducted in 1994. Feedback regarding postnatal care remains concerning with only 51% of women indicating they were very happy with care in hospital in the first few days after giving birth. Two papers based on the study findings were published in 2006.

FUNDING: Victorian Department of Human Services 1999-2001

STATUS: Final report to DHS submitted June 2001, three reports published, seven papers and one book chapter published

Evaluation of Practice and the Organisation of Care at Southern Health and Sandringham Hospital (EPOCS)

Jane Yelland, Ann Krastev, Stephanie Brown, Judith Lumley and Rhonda Small in collaboration with Mary Anne Biro, Southern Health

In considering the evidence regarding best clinical practice and the recognised problems with traditional public maternity care, Southern Health implemented a new approach to maternity care over 1999/2001. The new maternity enhancement initiatives included the promotion of greater continuity of midwife care during labour, birth and the time in hospital following the birth; postnatal planning with women during pregnancy; and assisting medical staff and midwives to consider evidence in the provision of care.

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FUNDING: Victorian Department of Human Services, Maternity Services Enhancement Quality Improvement Funding, 1999-2002

STATUS: Three final reports published, one paper published, one paper in press, two papers in preparation, PhD awarded (JY)

A review of postnatal hospital care in Victoria (PinC)

Della Forster, Judith Lumley, Jo Rayner, Jane Yelland in collaboration with Helen McLachlan, Clinical School of Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Studies, La Trobe University

A decade of Victorian research found low levels of satisfaction with postnatal care among women and little was known of how hospital postnatal services are organised.

PinC (Postnatal in-hospital Care: a review) was conducted in 2004 and had two major stages of data collection - a survey of all public maternity hospitals and interviews with key informants. Sixty-six hospitals participated in the survey, a response fraction of 96%. 38 interviews were conducted with managers, midwives and medical practitioners working in a range of large and small, rural and metropolitan maternity hospitals across Victoria.

There was great diversity in the provision of postnatal care across Victoria with differences in models of care, staffing arrangements, physical facilities and routine practices. Overall, care providers were enthusiastic about postnatal care, and committed to ensuring this care was of high quality. However, there was a strong sense that the provision of early postnatal care is considered a lower priority compared to other episodes of maternity care. A final report of the PinC Review findings was launched in May 2005 in conjunction with a seminar on early postnatal care.

The review has provided valuable information on the way public hospital postnatal services are provided in Victoria, what constrains care and innovations in service delivery. Importantly the PinC Review has assisted in our understanding of new possibilities that will inform the development and evaluation of interventions to improve care.

FUNDING: The William Buckland Foundation Grant 2003/4; Telstra Foundation Community Development Fund Grant 2004

STATUS: Data collection completed, final report published, four papers published

A review of postnatal care in the Victorian private hospital sector (PinC Private)

Jo Rayner, Della Forster, and Jane Yelland in collaboration with Helen McLachlan and Louise Peters, Clinical School of Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Studies, La Trobe University

While there is evidence that women's satisfaction with postnatal care is related to interactions with caregivers, very little was known about the views of caregivers until 2004 when the first state-wide review of public in-hospital postnatal care in Victoria was undertaken (*PinC*). The review involved a survey of all public maternity facilities in Victoria and interviews with key informants from selected hospitals. Caregivers were very enthusiastic about the study but the review revealed a diversity of practices in the provision of care across the State, including differences in the organisation of care, staffing arrangements, facilities and routine practices. Barriers to provision of high quality postnatal care were also identified including the busyness of the units, the inadequacy of staff-patient ratios, and the priority given to other episodes of care.

Given that approximately one third of Victorian births occur in the private sector, in 2006 we undertook a review of the private sector (*PinC private*) using the same methodology as the review of public postnatal care. Data collection included a postal survey to all private maternity units and key informant interviews with midwives, maternity managers and medical practitioners. Louise Peters, a Masters of Midwifery student undertook the key-informant interviews as the research component of her degree, completing 11 interviews across the private sector. Both reviews will provide a comprehensive understanding of the structure and the provision of postnatal care in Victoria. Together the reviews identified a number of major barriers to the provision of quality postnatal hospital care suggesting that an evidence-base should be developed to guide early postnatal care and that appropriate guidelines should be used in the provision of care.

FUNDING: La Trobe Faculty of Health Science Faculty Grant 2006, MCHR Grant 2006
STATUS: Hospital postal questionnaire and key-informant interviews completed, analysis commenced

The feasibility and development of a patient preference package of postnatal care (PinC Package)

Jane Yelland, Della Forster, Jo Rayner, Lisa Gold and Stephanie Brown in collaboration with Helen McLachlan, Clinical School of Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Studies, La Trobe University, and with the assistance of Sharon Rayner, Public Health Trainee

The Victorian state-wide review of hospital postnatal care conducted in 2004 (*PinC*) identified a diversity of approaches to the provision of early postnatal care. The busyness of postnatal wards, inadequate staffing numbers, and priority being given to other episodes of care were several of the barriers that providers felt impacted on the provision of care.

In 2006 we conducted a feasibility study that aimed to explore women's preferences for alternative packages of early postnatal care and to examine managerial and organisational support for a reorganisation of care. The postnatal options presented to women included alternatives to the current standard length of stay in hospital together with home or community-based care arrangements. We anticipate that such approaches will provide women with flexibility and choice in how they receive care following birth and may lead to significant improvements in women's experiences of postnatal care and in several maternal health outcomes, including breastfeeding.

Over 50 women participated in focus groups or interviews and several discussions were conducted with key stakeholders. The findings of the feasibility study will inform new options for postnatal care which will be piloted in 2007, prior to evaluation within a randomised controlled trial.

FUNDING: La Trobe Faculty of Health Sciences Grant 2006, MCHR Grant 2006
STATUS: Focus groups, interviews and consultation with key stakeholders completed, analysis completed, final report preparation in progress

PinC ANEW

Helen McLachlan, Della Forster, Jane Yelland, Jo Rayner, Stephanie Brown and Rebecca Collins in collaboration with Kelsey Hegarty and Jane Gunn, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne, as well as Lisa Love and Margie Cass, Mercy Hospital for Women and Jenny Kelly, Barwon Health

An alternative approach to psychosocial risk screening which focused on advanced communication skills for midwives and doctors was recently implemented as a six-month education program (*ANEW*) and evaluated using a before/after design. The program evaluation showed that participating midwives and doctors self-reported comfort and competency when identifying and caring for women with psychosocial difficulties increased.

In the recent Victorian state-wide review of hospital postnatal care (*PinC*), 55% of key informants raised the issue that some midwives are not comfortable dealing with psychosocial issues. The *PinC* review recommended that an *ANEW* style program be considered for staff who care for women during the postnatal period. Given the context of the postnatal environment, women's low ratings of satisfaction with care, limitations of psychosocial risk screening, and the challenges for care providers in dealing with sensitive issues, a re-emphasis on an individual needs-based approach is likely to be beneficial to women after childbirth.

A new approach to postnatal care focusing on advanced communication skills of midwives and nurses may also improve women's satisfaction with care and enhance women's comfort in disclosing psychosocial issues with the potential to impact on other health outcomes such as breastfeeding. In 2006 we redesigned the original *ANEW* program to make it suitable to the postnatal environment. The redesigned packages have been piloted at two sites and evaluated using a before/after design.

FUNDING: La Trobe University Faculty of Health Sciences Grant 2006
STATUS: Data collection and analysis

HARP: Health And Recovery after operative birth Project

Rhonda Small and Judith Lumley in collaboration with Elina Hemmincki, STAKES (Institute for Health and Welfare) Finland; Les Reti, Royal Women's Hospital; Jane Gunn, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne and Lisa Donohue

The aims of this project were to contribute to the current debate about the benefits of elective caesarean section compared with vaginal birth for healthy women at term by following a large cohort of women, all of whom had an assisted delivery between 1996 and 1998, in order to provide a more complete and a longer-term comparison of maternal health sequelae.

The study had three components:

- a postal questionnaire to all women in the cohort sent 4-6 years after the index birth;
- a review of health information records for the index birth and all subsequent births for all participants who provided written consent in responding to the postal questionnaire; and
- a qualitative sub-study exploring women's experiences of health and recovery following Caesarean birth.

FUNDING: NHMRC project grant 2001-2003

STATUS: One paper published in 2006, one in preparation

Attachment to the breast and family attitudes towards breastfeeding (ABFAB) ISRCTN21556494

Judith Lumley, Della Forster, Helen McLachlan and Lisa Amir in collaboration with Christine Beanland, Nurses Board Victoria; Dianne Earl, Kaye Dyson and Heather Harris, Royal Women's Hospital; Roger Short, Department of Perinatal Medicine, Royal Women's Hospital; and Ulla Waldenstrom, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden

ABFAB was a randomised controlled trial evaluating the effect of two educational interventions in the middle of pregnancy on the initiation and duration of breastfeeding.

981 women having their first baby, who were booked into The Royal Women's Hospital (RWH) were enrolled in the project in

mid-pregnancy (approximately 18 weeks), and randomly allocated to one of three groups: a control group or one of two interventions - an antenatal breastfeeding class focused on practical aspects of breastfeeding and two antenatal breastfeeding classes that explored family attitudes to breastfeeding. Classes took place between weeks 20-25 of pregnancy. All women had access to the standard childbirth education at the RWH.

Neither intervention increased breastfeeding initiation or duration compared to standard care. Breastfeeding initiation was 96% (296/308) in the 'practical skills' group, 94 % (291/312) in the 'attitudes' group, and 95% (297/313) in the group allocated to standard care. Six months after birth, 53% (158/297) of women in the 'practical skills' group, 47% (138/293) of those in the 'attitudes' group and 52% (153/299) of those allocated to standard care were feeding any breast milk. We conclude that in settings where breastfeeding initiation is already high, neither of the two interventions can be recommended as effective strategies to increase initiation or duration.

FUNDING: NHMRC Project Grant 1998-2000, RWH scholarship 2002, VicHealth scholarship 2003-2005

STATUS: Trial completed, PhD awarded (DF), four papers published, and three in preparation

Prevalence and prevention of mastitis in lactating women

Lisa Amir and Judith Lumley in collaboration with Suzanne Garland, Women's and Children's Health

Mastitis is a common problem during lactation; approximately 20% of women experience at least one episode. The first part of the study was a breastfeeding survey of women giving birth in the Family Birth Centre (FBC) and Frances Perry House (FPH, private patients). One hundred and twenty eight women were recruited from the FBC and 202 from FPH. The second part of the project was a trial to prevent mastitis: ROBIN - Reduction of Breast Infection. As very few women with cracked nipples were identified, recruitment ceased in late 2002. A third project, a case-control study investigating possible risk factors for mastitis was completed in 2004. CAMEO, Cases of Mastitis: Evaluating Occurrences, involved women attending the Royal Women's Hospital, Mercy Hospital for Women and maternal and child health centres in Moreland, Darebin, Melbourne and Port Phillip. The main research question is "Are women with mastitis more likely to be nasal carriers of *S. aureus* than other breastfeeding women?"

FUNDING: NHMRC Public Health scholarship 2000-03 (LA); Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies

STATUS: PhD awarded (LA), five papers published, further papers in preparation

Peer support for breastfeeding - feasibility study

Della Forster, Mary-Ann Davey, Judith Lumley and Lisa Amir in collaboration with Helen McLachlan, Clinical School of Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Studies, La Trobe University and Lisa Gold, School of Public Health, La Trobe University

Breastfeeding has health benefits for both mother and baby and exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first six months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding (along with other food) into the second year of life. Women often stop breastfeeding sooner than they would like because of inadequate support. Low income women in particular are less likely to continue to breastfeed and less likely to seek support. Many strategies aimed at increasing the duration of breastfeeding have failed. Trials in Canada and the Philippines have achieved increased duration of breastfeeding by providing women with support from a peer who has herself successfully breastfed. Before introducing such a program in Australia, it is important to explore local women's views about using peer supporters, and women's views about acting as peer supporters.

We are conducting a feasibility study to explore the idea that telephone peer support in the early postnatal period might increase breastfeeding duration. We will explore the acceptability of peer support for breastfeeding from the perspective of

breastfeeding women and potential peer supporters. We will also explore whether the proposed model would be a viable option for women with a Vietnamese background, given the low rates of both initiating and continuing breastfeeding among Vietnamese-born women in our community.

FUNDING: La Trobe Faculty of Health Science Faculty Grant 2006, MCHR Grant 2006
STATUS: Feasibility study underway. Four focus groups conducted, two more planned

The role of micro-organisms (*S. aureus* & *C. albicans*) in the pathogenesis of breast pain and infection in lactating women

Lisa Amir and Judith Lumley, in collaboration with Suzanne Garland and Sepehr Tabrizi, Royal Women's Hospital, and Susan Donath, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute

This project is a descriptive study of 330 breastfeeding women, recruited from the Royal Women's Hospital and Frances Perry House. The aim of the study is to investigate the role of micro-organisms in nipple and breast pain in breastfeeding women. At present, there is controversy about whether burning nipple pain associated with radiating breast pain is caused by fungal infection (*Candida albicans*, known as "thrush") or bacterial infection (*Staphylococcus aureus*, known as "golden staph").

Swabs will be collected from mothers' noses and nipples and their baby's mouth. Breast milk will also be collected. These samples will be collected in the first three days after the birth, then once per week for four weeks. Women will also complete questionnaires at recruitment, then weekly postpartum for four weeks. The study will conclude with a telephone interview at eight weeks postpartum, to collect further information about breastfeeding problems such as nipple and breast pain.

FUNDING: NHMRC Health Professional Research Fellowship 2006-2009 (LA)

STATUS: Seeking funding and ethics approval

Medications and breastfeeding women: Knowledge, attitudes and practices of GPs

Lisa Amir and Jeanne Daly, in collaboration with Marie Pirotta, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne, and Molika In, Pharmacy Department, Royal Women's Hospital

At times, women who are breastfeeding will consider taking medicines. These may include complementary and over-the-counter as well as prescribed medicines. General practitioners tend to rely on pharmaceutical companies for information about medicines. The companies' usual advice is to be cautious about prescribing medicines to breastfeeding women. However, there are very few medicines which need to be used with caution while breastfeeding.

This study aims to investigate general practitioners' knowledge, attitudes and practices about the use of medicines in breastfeeding women. These issues will be explored using in-depth interviews with a small number of GPs (10-20) and a survey of a larger group (about 650 people).

FUNDING: NHMRC Health Professional Research Fellowship 2006-2009 (LA)

STATUS: Seeking funding and ethics approval

A study of the provision of the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) over-the-counter (OTC) in Australia

Angela Taft, and Judith Lumley in collaboration with Kay Stewart and Colin Chapman, Victorian College of Pharmacy, Monash University; Julia Shelley, School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University; and Anthony Smith, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University

A collaboration of researchers is evaluating the implementation of the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) levonorgestrel over-the-counter (OTC) in Australia. The availability of ECP through Australian pharmacies could potentially make significant differences to rates of ECP use and reduce unwanted and unplanned pregnancies and abortion rates in Australia. The study aims to: examine the effectiveness of distribution of ECP; measure the costs, knowledge and patterns of use of ECP; and explore barriers to access to emergency contraception, in a random

sample of sexually active Australian women aged between 16 and 35, prior to and after the implementation of OTC ECP in Australia.

Ethics approval has been received, recruitment has commenced, and the reference group established for the study has met several times.

FUNDING: Australian Research Council Linkage Grant

PROGRESS: Ongoing

Termination of pregnancy in Australia: a descriptive analysis of trends over time and associations in the young women's cohort of Women's Health Australia *Angela Taft and Lyn Watson*

Using the data from the 1996 and 2000 surveys of the young women's cohorts of the Australian Longitudinal Women's Health Study (Women's Health Australia) this analysis aimed to:

- provide descriptive summary statistics of the population of young women who had one or more terminations including socio-demographic characteristics, area of residence/location, and use of contraception;
- compare them within age strata with (i) women who have not had a termination and (ii) women who have not had a pregnancy;
- examine the changes in reported terminations from the 1996 to the 2000 survey, and describe their relationship to other pregnancy outcomes in the same time period, for the whole young women's cohort;
- compare the reported rate of terminations in these surveys with age-specific rates between 1996 and 2000 collected through the mandatory reporting systems in South Australia and the Northern Territory, both of whom produce annual reports; and
- undertake subsequent analysis to examine factors associated with women reporting terminations, violence status and depression.

FUNDING: La Trobe University Faculty of Health Science Grant 2002

STATUS: One paper submitted and another in progress

Systematic Reviews

Debriefing for the prevention of psychological trauma in women following childbirth

The Review group comprises: Maria Helena Bastos, Debra Bick and Cathy Rowan, Thames Valley University, United Kingdom; Rhonda Small; and Kirstie McKenzie-McHarg, National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, Oxford, United Kingdom

FUNDING: None

STATUS: Protocol submitted to the Cochrane Collaboration Depression, Anxiety, and Neurosis Group

PERINATAL AND CHILD OUTCOMES

Early Births - a case-control study of very preterm birth

Lyn Watson, Judith Lumley, and Jo Rayner in collaboration with David Henderson-Smart, Director, Centre for Perinatal Health Services Research and James King, Chair, Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity

This study aims to describe the social and demographic associations of very preterm birth in singletons and twins in Victoria; to describe the clinical subtypes of very preterm birth in both singletons and twins in Victoria; and to provide preliminary information on the contributions of exposure to violence, infertility and infertility treatment and neighbourhood level factors to very preterm birth in Victoria. The cases are mothers of babies born between 20 and 32 weeks gestation and their characteristics will be compared with those of the control mothers selected from the Victorian population whose babies are born at 37 weeks gestation or later. Data collection included a semi-structured interview, either face-to-face or by telephone, and medical record data extraction.

Analysis of the data is now under way. A paper describing the evaluation of the data collection process has been published. A paper on response issues and one on the ethics approval process have been submitted for publication.

FUNDING: NHMRC project grant 2001-2003, SIDS & Kids Victoria 2003-2004 and Faculty Health Sciences Research Enhancement Grant, La Trobe University 2003, Telstra Community Development Fund 2003; NHMRC PhD Scholarship 2006(LW)

STATUS: Data collection complete, data analysis in process, PhD scholarship awarded (LW), one paper published, two submitted, two in preparation

Systematic Reviews

Risk scoring systems for preventing pre-term birth

Mary-Ann Davey, Lyn Watson, and Jo Rayner in collaboration with Shelley Rowlands, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Royal Women's Hospital

The concept of using risk-scoring systems in maternity care is quite appealing. If they could be shown to predict poor outcomes more accurately than clinical judgement, their use would enable targeted interventions to be applied. Many such instruments have been developed and used over the years, but most have not been evaluated. In addition, knowing that an individual is at higher-than-average risk for a particular outcome is not helpful if no effective intervention exists. We plan to use the protocol to review the evidence regarding the use of such systems in predicting, and preventing pre-term birth.

FUNDING: None

STATUS: Protocol published in the Cochrane Library, July 2004, review underway

Collaborative Work

The Women and Babies Wellbeing: Action through Trials (WOMBAT) Collaboration

The WOMBAT Collaboration Advisory Group: Caroline Crowther, Jodie Dodd, Jeffrey Robinson and Philippa Middleton, Women's & Children's Hospital, Adelaide; Lex Doyle and Steve Cole, Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne; Vicki Flenady, Mater Misericordiae Mother's Hospital, Brisbane; David Henderson-Smart, William Tarnow-Mordi and Christine Roberts, University of Sydney; Karen Simmer, University of Western Australia; and Judith Lumley Vic/Tas coordinator: Michelle Kealy

The specific aim of the WOMBAT Collaboration is to promote and support high quality randomised clinical trials in the perinatal area in order to improve the health and wellbeing of women and their children. It will do this through identifying national priority research areas and encouraging appropriate clinical and methodological trials; providing high level support to researchers undertaking multi-centre trials at national and regional levels; and providing education and training in trial design and conduct.

The Women and Babies Wellbeing: Action through Trials (WOMBAT) Collaboration held four national/regional workshops and contributed to another national workshop, with an estimated total of 200 participants in 2006.

FUNDING: NHMRC Enabling Grant 2005-2010

STATUS: National database of perinatal trials established; research gaps identified; website developed; training and education workshops completed and in preparation

CROSS-CULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Improving maternity care and obstetric outcomes for immigrant women

Rhonda Small in collaboration with the Victorian Perinatal Data Collection Unit and the NSW Midwives' Data Collection

Around 15% of births in Australia are to immigrant women born in countries where English is not the principal language spoken (NES-countries). Considerable variation in outcomes (eg obstetric interventions, mode of delivery) by maternal country of birth occurs but the reasons remain unknown. Is the variation in outcomes by maternal country of birth explained by social and obstetric differences between the groups or by a more subtle interplay of non-medical and contextual factors, such as communication difficulties adversely affecting care?

Initially the project aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of immigrant women's obstetric outcomes by:

- describing the maternal characteristics and obstetric outcomes for immigrant women from NES-countries giving birth in Victoria (1983-2003) and NSW (1990-2003); and
- comparing obstetric outcomes for women born overseas in NES-countries with (i) women born in Australia and (ii) women born overseas in ES-countries.

FUNDING: NHMRC Career Development Award (2005-2009)

STATUS: Ongoing

Collaborative Work

Reproductive Outcomes And Migration (ROAM): an international collaboration

Rhonda Small in collaboration with Anita Gagnon, McGill University, Canada; Alison McFarlane and Caroline Roth, City University, UK; Mika Gissler, STAKES, Finland, Beatrice Blondel and Jennifer Zeitlin, INSERM, France; Sophie Alexander, Free University of Brussels, Belgium; Babill Stray Pedersen, University of Oslo, Norway; Domenico DiLallo, Public Health Agency, Italy; and Dineke Korfker, TNO Institute, The Netherlands

The collaboration aims to undertake comparative work on migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women's reproductive health outcomes and their views of maternity care in Europe, North America and Australia. The collaboration began with an initial grant awarded from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) International Opportunity Development Grant Scheme to establish research links between Canada and Australia for comparing reproductive health outcomes of immigrant and refugee women. The first meeting of a wider collaborative network with researchers from the UK, Italy, France, Belgium, and Finland was held at the European Congress of Epidemiology in Porto, Portugal in September 2004. Since then collaborators from Norway and the Netherlands have also joined the collaborative network. In 2006 a further grant was awarded by CIHR to support the collaboration and a two-day ROAM collaborators' meeting is scheduled for May 2007.

FUNDING: Canadian Institutes of Health Research International Opportunities Program, International Collaboration Grant

STATUS: Two papers in preparation

LONGER-TERM HEALTH OUTCOMES

Maternal health study: a prospective cohort study of nulliparous women recruited in early pregnancy

Stephanie Brown, Ann Krastev, Ellie McDonald, Maggie Flood, Martine Kilby, Susan Perlen, Leisje Brice, Hannah Woolhouse and Judith Lumley in collaboration with Shaun Brennecke, Department of Perinatal Medicine, University of Melbourne, Royal Women's Hospital; Jane Gunn and Kelsey Hegarty, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne; Christine MacArthur, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Birmingham; and Susan Donath, Murdoch Children's Research Institute

The *Maternal health study* is a longitudinal study investigating the health and well-being of over 1500 women during pregnancy and after the birth of their first child. The study is designed to fill in some of the gaps in current research evidence regarding women's physical and psychological health and recovery after childbirth.

The primary aims in phase 1 of the study are to:

- investigate the incidence and natural history of maternal physical health problems, in particular, urinary and anal incontinence, perineal pain, sexual problems and depression;
- explore the contribution of obstetric risk factors, in particular complications in labour, the method of delivery and degree of perineal trauma to postpartum health problems.

Women having their first baby and booking to give birth at six participating hospitals were invited to join the study between April 2003 and December 2005. All women in the cohort completed a baseline questionnaire in early pregnancy. Follow-up in phase 1 of the study is at 30-32 weeks of pregnancy and at 3, 6, 9, 12 and 18 months postpartum. Data on pregnancy and birth events is being abstracted from medical records. Participation in each stage of the study has been high: 96% of eligible women have completed the 3 month questionnaire, 94% have completed questionnaires at 6 and 12 months, and 94% have taken part in telephone interviews at 9 months postpartum.

This year follow-up has been extended to investigate the natural history of longer term maternal health outcomes 18 months to four years after the index (first) birth. The study will provide the first Australian data on the incidence of maternal health problems - including urinary incontinence, sexual health issues and depression - and add to international evidence concerning the role of birth events in maternal health outcomes. The findings will be used to design intervention and primary care strategies to support women in the early years of parenting.

FUNDING: VicHealth/Human Services Victoria Public Health Research Fellowship 2001-2005 (SB); NHMRC Project Grant 2002-2006; La Trobe University, Faculty of Health Sciences Small Grant 2006; William Buckland Project Grant 2006-2007; ANZ Trustees Medical Research and Technology in Victoria Grant 2006

STATUS: Recruitment complete, coding and data entry complete for baseline and 3 month questionnaires and CATI in late pregnancy, follow-up and medical records data abstraction ongoing; data analysis commenced, funding secured to support phase 2 of the study extending follow-up to 4 years post the index birth; study protocol published

PRISM: Program of Resources, Information and Support for Mothers

Judith Lumley, Rhonda Small, Stephanie Brown, Creina Mitchell and Lyn Watson in collaboration with Jane Gunn, Department of General Practice and Public Health, University of Melbourne; and Penny Hawe, Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary, Canada

PRISM was a community intervention trial in 16 municipalities across Victoria which aimed to improve the physical and emotional health of women following childbirth via an integrated program of primary care and community based strategies, implemented in 1999 and 2000, with outcome data collection occurring over three years, from August 2000 to August 2003. Detailed information about PRISM can be accessed on the project website: www.latrobe.edu.au/mchr/prism

The six-month maternal health outcome findings of PRISM were made available to participating communities at a meeting held on Thursday 15 December 2005 in Melbourne. A second meeting with communities was held on 24 February 2006 to discuss the findings further and to distribute individual reports to each of the 16 participating municipalities.

The primary outcomes paper was published on 17th February 2006 and can be downloaded free at:
<http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-6-37.pdf>

Analysis of the two-year follow-up data is continuing.

FUNDING: La Trobe University and Victorian Department of Human Services Collaborative Industry Grant 1997, NHMRC Project Grants 1997-99, 1999-01 and 2002-04, Victorian Department of Human Services Program Implementation Grants 1998-2000, VicHealth Grants for program resources and implementation 1998-2000, Felton Bequest Grant 1998, Sidney Myer Fund Grant 1999, beyondblue Grant 2002 and participating municipalities' contributions to program implementation and data collection 1998-2003.

STATUS: Four papers published; 16 municipality reports published; two-year follow-up data analysis in progress

MOSAIC (MOtherS' Advocates In the Community): a community randomised trial

Angela Taft, Rhonda Small and Judith Lumley, in collaboration with Kelsey Hegarty, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne

MOSAIC is a community intervention trial to reduce or prevent partner violence and depression among women pregnant or with children under five. It also aims to strengthen women's health and wellbeing and attachment to their children by offering abused or at risk women who are identified by their GPs, support from trained mentor mothers for up to a year after recruitment. Mentor mothers are trusted and compassionate community women with additional training including partner violence, depression and parenting support. MOSAIC includes an additional sub study with the Vietnamese community. The research team acknowledges the continued support of Women's Health West and Women's Health in the North.

In 2006, following Victorian Community Support Grant funding, MOSAIC commenced its full implementation with six Maternal and Child Health (MCH) nurse teams and 28 GPs from 24 general practices in Melbourne's north-western suburbs. After training, each group was randomised to intervention or comparison arms and they have continued to refer eligible women to the project. 163 baseline questionnaires have been completed to date, with vulnerable women often difficult to reach. In the implementation arm, women have been matched with supportive mentors, while women waiting to be matched are contacted regularly by MOSAIC support staff. Mentors are invited to meet regularly and are able to call the coordinators at any time. MOSAIC has invited further MCH nurse teams and GPs to join the project in 2007 to enhance the referral numbers. Our interim evaluation process is underway. GP guidelines associated with the project have been endorsed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and published on their website with an editorial published in the Medical Journal of Australia.

FUNDING: Community Support Grants Fund, Telstra Community Development Fund, NHMRC, VicHealth, Victorian Community Council Against Violence, Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services

STATUS: One paper published and MOSAIC will be presented to the US Family Violence Prevention Fund Domestic Violence and Health conference in 2007

Violence against young Australian women and reproductive health

Angela Taft and Lyn Watson, in collaboration with Women's Health Australia, University of Newcastle

This study analyses data from the Younger Women's cohort of the Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health (Women's Health Australia). Angela Taft has adjunct investigator status with Women's Health Australia. The project investigates the impact of violence and abuse (mainly but not only by intimate partners) on young women's health, particularly their reproductive health, over time. Using linked data analysis and multinomial logistic regression, the study compares the sociodemographic characteristics, reproductive and general health, social support, aspirations, use of health services and satisfaction with GP care of young Australian women reporting violence with those not reporting it. It also examines the differences between women leaving violence behind them, remaining the same or finding themselves in new and violent relationships.

FUNDING: Office for the Status of Women, Canberra

STATUS: One paper published, two submitted

Systematic Reviews

Interventions to reduce or eliminate violence and promote the physical and psychosocial well-being of women who experience intimate partner abuse: a systematic review

Angela Taft and Liesje Toomey in collaboration with Kelsey Hegarty, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne; Jean Ramsey, Gene Feder and Yvonne Carter, Department of General Practice and Primary Care, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry; Leslie Davidson and Joseph L Mailman, Department of Population and Family Health, School of Public Health, Columbia University; and Alison Warburton, Centre for Women's Mental Health Research, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences, Manchester University

Angela Taft and Kelsey Hegarty were successful in attracting a small Cochrane bursary to work with Liesje Toomey to complete the protocol on 'Screening interventions' for their section of a composite set of protocols examining effectiveness of partner abuse interventions. Work on this protocol was completed in 2006 and submitted for review. The first protocol (Advocacy interventions to reduce or eliminate violence and promote the physical and psychosocial well-being of women who experience intimate partner abuse) was published in the Cochrane Library, Issue 4, 2004.

FUNDING: UK National Health Service, Cochrane Collaboration (Health Promotion), and VicHealth

STATUS: Protocol submitted for review in 2006

Collaborative Work

WEAVE: Women's Evaluation of Abuse and Violence Care in General Practice

Angela Taft in collaboration with Kelsey Hegarty, Rhian Parker and Gail Gilchrist, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne

WEAVE's main objective is to evaluate the international consensus partner abuse guidelines on whole family care in general practice from a consumer perspective. It aims to answer the following questions:

- what do women who have experienced fear of their partner during their lifetime think about how general practitioners should manage partner abuse in the context of whole family care?
- how do women who have experienced fear of their partner during their lifetime describe their pathways to recovery and how have general practitioners contributed to this pathway?

WEAVE has conducted three focus groups and interviewed ten of the 20 proposed interviewees recruited from the *DIAMOND* depression study.

FUNDING: beyondblue 2005-2006

STATUS: Ongoing

OTHER COLLABORATIONS

Long-term health and psychosocial effects of hormone treatment to reduce the adult height of tall girls

Alison Venn, Menzies Research Institute, University of Tasmania, Judith Lumley, Priscilla Pyett, Fiona Bruinsma, Penelope Jones, Joanne Rayner and Lyn Watson in collaboration with George Werther, Centre for Hormone Research, Royal Children's Hospital; George Patton, Centre for Adolescent Health; and Chris Bayly, Royal Women's Hospital

This study aimed to examine the long-term health and psychosocial effects of oestrogen treatment to reduce the adult height of tall girls. Although uncommon in recent years, treatment of tall girls has been available in Australia and elsewhere since the 1950s. The relatively young age and small numbers of women in the follow-up studies reported to date mean that little is known about long-term outcomes for women.

The cohort of 1,432 women who were treated or assessed in Australia between the late 1950s through to 1993 were eligible, of which 1,243 (87%) were traced and 846 (68%) participated. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to examine a range of health outcomes.

Analysis of fertility outcomes showed that treated women were more likely to have had a lower rate of conception and a history of infertility than untreated women. Overall, satisfaction levels were high in untreated women no matter how tall they became and 95.5% were satisfied with the decision not to be treated. A comparison of mental health outcomes in treated and untreated tall women showed that the two groups were similar in their history of depression. Compared with the general population of women of the same age, however, study participants were more likely to have experienced depression.

FUNDING: NHRMC consultancy contract 2000-2003

STATUS: Three papers published, three papers in preparation

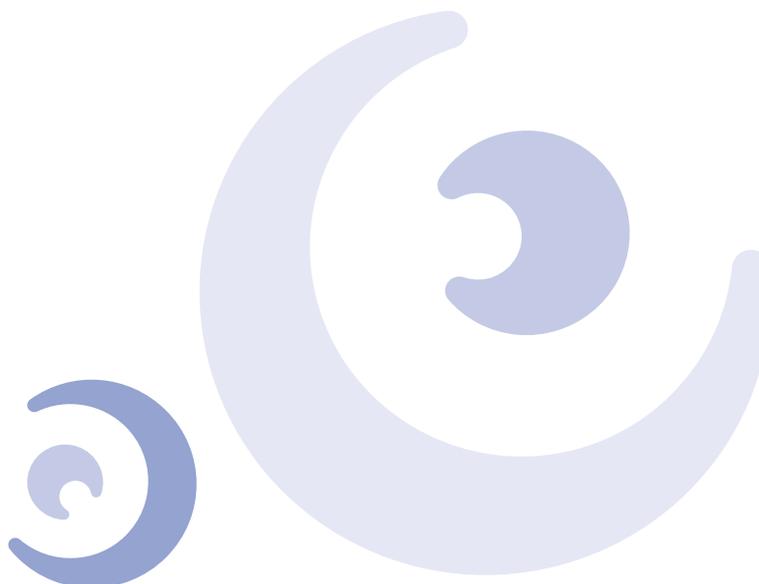
The DIAMOND consortium

Judith Lumley and Stephanie Brown (Steering Committee) with Rhonda Small and Angela Taft are participating in this Consortium, which is led by Jane Gunn, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne

The *DIAMOND* consortium brings together a multidisciplinary team with expertise in complex primary care and mental health research and evaluation across the life cycle, clinical expertise, and links to other service providers to build mental health research and service capacity in Victoria. The focus is on the management that occurs within primary care and the interface between that care, the community and the public and private mental health services. The *DIAMOND* consortium comprises the commitment from consumers (Health Issues Centre, Relationships Australia, Surfcoast Life Activity Club); practitioners (general practitioners, nursing, community health, primary mental health team, a specialist mental health service The Bouverie Centre, Divisions of General Practice); policy makers (Community health policy); and researchers (universities and centres of excellence) across rural and metropolitan settings.

FUNDING: beyondblue

STATUS: Ongoing



POSTGRADUATE STUDY 2006

MCHR supports a lively educational program for a diverse group of postgraduate students with backgrounds in midwifery, statistics, community health, maternal and child health, social work and women's health. The 2006 postgraduate group comprised staff and full-time students completing postgraduate study (PhDs, Professional doctorates and Master's), nine of whom were enrolled at MCHR, two MCHR associates and three Masters of Midwifery students enrolled in the La Trobe University School of Nursing and Midwifery. The group holds monthly seminars throughout the year to enable students to present and discuss aspects of their work and for input on methodological and other research issues. In 2006 the postgraduate group included: staff members Fiona Bruinsma, Mary-Ann Davey, Michelle Kealy, Ellie McDonald, Jo Rayner and Lyn Watson; MCHR students Sue Armstrong, Melissa Hobbs and Touran Shafiei; MCHR associates Lisa Gold, (School of Public Health, La Trobe University), and Mary-Anne Measey, (Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, University of Western Australia); and Master of Midwifery students Sue Perlen, Louise Peters, and Tracey Savage.

Postgraduate Co-ordinator 2006: Rhonda Small

POSTGRADUATE PROJECTS

The experience of postnatal depression in a rural Australian community

Sue Armstrong and Rhonda Small

This project aims to investigate pathways to care in a Victorian rural community for women experiencing depression after childbirth. The study is being undertaken in three phases in a rural shire in Gippsland, where routine screening for postnatal depression using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) has been in operation for the last ten years. Phase one consisted of an audit of all women potentially eligible for screening to identify more clearly the proportion of women screened and the results of screening. Phase two consisted of interviews with care providers responsible for carrying out the program (maternal and child health services and local general practitioners) with the aim of determining how the program worked and the results of any referrals for women identified as probably depressed. A CPD night on screening for postnatal depression is planned in early 2007 for nurses and GPs in the local Division of General Practice. Phase three will consist of a postal survey of women and in-depth interviews with women to find out more about women's experiences of the screening program and referrals.

FUNDING: La Trobe University Postgraduate Research scholarship 2006-2007 and *Diamond* Consortium Seed and Capacity Building Grant

STATUS: Phase one complete, one paper in press; Phase two data being analysed; Phase three ethics approval received, second audit near completion, and interviews with women commencing

Perinatal outcomes following treatment for cervical dysplasia

Fiona Bruinsma and Judith Lumley in collaboration with Michael Quinn, Gynaecological Oncologist, Royal Women's Hospital Melbourne

The aim of this project was to measure preterm birth, perinatal death and low birthweight in births to women who were referred to the Dysplasia Clinic at the Royal Women's Hospital from 1982-2000 after a diagnosis of biopsy-proven precancerous changes of the cervix, and to compare their risk of these outcomes with the risks in the whole Victorian population. The study was a retrospective cohort study in which records from the Dysplasia Clinic were linked to birth records in the Victorian Data Collection for the years 1983-2002. The analysis of the linked data files took into account other risk factors for preterm birth present in the birth data (e.g. maternal age at birth, country of birth, parity, gravidity, socio-economic status) as well as the severity of the cervical lesions, the extent of treatment required and the treatment modality. The study found that diagnosis of pre-cancerous changes in the cervix (regardless of treatment) was associated with an increased risk of preterm birth.

FUNDING: NHMRC Project Grant 2003-2004; NHMRC PhD scholarship 2005-2007

STATUS: One paper published, thesis in preparation

Analysis of the course of labour following induction in uncomplicated first births

Mary-Ann Davey and Judith Lumley in collaboration with James King, Chair, Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity, Victoria Department of Human Services and Consultant in Perinatal Medicine, Royal Women's Hospital, University of Melbourne

Induction of labour is a valuable intervention that has the potential to improve outcomes for both mothers and babies when used in pregnancies that have become dangerous to continue. However there is some evidence to suggest that its use is increasing, and that it is used fairly often in pregnancies with no apparent indication for induction.

These changes prompted the following research questions:

- Are there differences between spontaneous and induced labours in nulliparous Victorian women admitted as public patients with uncomplicated pregnancies, with regard to events during labour and method of birth, and in the condition of the mother and baby at birth?
- Does this differ for private patients or for older women?
- To what extent are other factors associated with induction of labour influencing outcomes?

Data collected by the Victorian Perinatal Data Collection Unit (PDCU) are used to investigate these questions. The analysis includes all births between 2000 and 2005 to women 20-34 years old, free of obstetric or specified medical complications, giving birth at term (37-40 weeks), with a singleton pregnancy, a cephalic presentation (head first) and a baby who is not small or large for gestational age.

FUNDING: Australian Postgraduate Award (until July 2004)

STATUS: Analysis in progress

The emergency contraceptive pill rescheduled: knowledge, attitudes and practice among women and pharmacist: a sub-study of the study of the provision of the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) over-the-counter (OTC) in Australia

Melissa Hobbs, Angela Taft, and Judith Lumley in collaboration with Kay Stewart, Victorian College of Pharmacy, Monash University

The aim of this study is to assess whether the rescheduling of the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) levonorgestrel in Australia has improved its accessibility and use by women at risk of unwanted pregnancy and whether pharmacists feel confident, well-trained and supported to provide it.

Focus groups with women users of ECP will explore knowledge of, access to, attitudes towards and experiences of using ECP and focus groups and interviews with pharmacists who have been involved in the provision of ECP will explore training, attitudes and practice. Findings from the focus groups and interviews will inform the development of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) with a random sample of Australian women and a national survey of pharmacists.

FUNDING: Australian Postgraduate Award (Industry) (2006-2008)

STATUS: Ethics approval obtained, recruitment of pharmacists and women commenced

Women's health and recovery after caesarean section - a sub-study of HARP (Health And Recovery after operative birth Project)

Michelle Kealy, Rhonda Small and Jeanne Daly

Caesarean section has for many years contributed to reduction in maternal and perinatal mortality. There is recent evidence however, that the escalating caesarean section rate has the potential for more harm than the benefits offered, especially when it is performed in the absence of medical reasons. This qualitative study sought to explain women's experiences of caesarean section, whether undertaken as an elective or emergency procedure, and as a first or subsequent birth. Analysis has involved women's participation in the decision to have a caesarean, women's intra-operative and post-operative experiences including the early postpartum period. In addition, the study has examined longer-term health issues for women after caesarean section.

FUNDING: PhD scholarship within NHMRC Project Grant for HARP study 2002-2005

STATUS: Full draft complete, revisions in progress

Women's sexual health in pregnancy and after childbirth

Ellie McDonald, Stephanie Brown in collaboration with Annette Street, School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University

The aim of this study is to develop a more comprehensive understanding of factors affecting women's sexual health and changes in intimate partner relationships during and after pregnancy. The study will draw on data collected in the *Maternal health study* and on face-to-face interviews with a sub-sample of women to be conducted two to two and half years after the birth of their first child.

FUNDING: William Buckland Project Grant 2006-2007

STATUS: Data analysis commenced

An exploration of parent-daughter relationships and depression in adulthood within the social context of treating tall stature in adolescent girls over three decades

Jo Rayner and Judith Lumley in collaboration with Priscilla Pyett, Centre for Health and Society, University of Melbourne, Alison Venn, Menzies Research Institute, University of Tasmania and Jill Astbury, School of Psychology, Victoria University

This project aims to examine the experiences of adolescent girls assessed and/or treated with synthetic oestrogens to reduce their estimated adult height, in light of known risks for major depression. Two in-depth interviews have been conducted with 35 tall women: 25 from the Tall Girls Study cohort and 10 women never assessed or treated for tall stature. An analysis of the prolific medical literature on treatment of tall stature published over the three decades treatment was at its peak in Australia has been undertaken to examine the representation of tall women within the medical discourse. Preliminary findings suggesting that socially enforced notions of femininity create body image issues for tall women, were presented at the 7th International Qualitative Methods Conference in July 2006.

FUNDING: NHMRC PhD scholarship (2005-2007)

STATUS: Interviews complete, analysis continuing, one paper and thesis in preparation

The experience of maternity care and depression after birth among Persian-speaking women in Melbourne

Touran Shafiei, Rhonda Small, and Helen McLachlan, Clinical School of Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Studies, La Trobe University

This study aims to explore the experience of childbirth and views of maternity care of immigrant women from Iran and Afghanistan; to investigate women's emotional well-being and experience of depression after birth; and to compare the findings with previous Victorian studies of Australian-born women and of other groups of immigrant women. Iranian and Afghan women are being recruited from four Melbourne hospitals (Monash Medical Centre, Dandenong Hospital, Mercy Hospital for Women and The Royal Women's Hospital). Data collection includes a brief hospital visit or telephone call at home after the birth, main telephone interview 4 months after birth, and a face-to-face in-depth interview with a small number of women (including those satisfied and not satisfied with care and depressed and not depressed).

FUNDING: La Trobe University, Faculty of Health Sciences Postgraduate Support Grant, *Diamond* Consortium Seed Funding

STATUS: Recruiting, piloting, data collection

VICTORIAN PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING SCHEME

In 2006 MCHR hosted Sharon Rayner, enrolled in the Public Health Training Scheme with the Victorian Department of Human Services, for four months. Sharon worked with Della Forster and the *PinC* team to facilitate focus groups with women and their partners to explore women's preferences for alternative packages of early postnatal care.

SEMINARS AT MCHR

The MCHR Seminar Program is held on the 4th Wednesday of every month from 12.30-1.30pm, excluding January and December. Extraordinary seminars are also offered to showcase the work of national and international academics/researchers visiting MCHR. International and interstate speakers complemented local presenters in 2006, ensuring diverse and interesting presentations. Thanks to all the speakers in 2006. If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive the twice yearly Seminar Program, phone 9624 8500. For more details please go to the website: www.latrobe.edu.au/mchr/

Seminar Program 2006

Seminar convenors: Michelle Kealy and Jo Rayner

February Professor Valerie J. King. Department of Family Medicine, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, Oregon, USA. A trial of labor after cesarean: a survey of hospital policies in Oregon.

March Dr Lisa Amir. Research Fellow, MCHR, La Trobe University and Lecturer, Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, University of Melbourne. Red breast: mastitis in lactating women.

April Dr Lisa Donohue. Research Associate, Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, University of Melbourne.

Postnatal debriefing did not improve health outcomes after operative birth: an investigation of possible explanatory factors

May Ms Bronny Handfield. PhD candidate, School of Communication Arts and Critical Enquiry - Media Studies, La Trobe University. Popular media represents childbirth.

June Dr Fiona Andrews. Lecturer, School of Public Health, La Trobe University, Managing the family's health: experiences of women with different working arrangements

July Associate Professor Damien Jolley. Monash Institute of Health Services Research, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences, Monash University, Visualising Variables Validity - a discourse on graphical display of scientific information

August Dr Therese Riley. Markin Research Fellow, Centre for Health & Society, University of Melbourne. The Dilemma of Sustainable Interventions

October Dr Samantha Thomas. Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Ethics in Medicine and Society, Department of Medicine, Central & Eastern Clinical School, Monash University. Post-flight experiences of unaccompanied refugee children in the United Kingdom

November Adjunct Associate Professor Jeanne Daly. MCHR, La Trobe University, Evidence Based Medicine: How do we move from trials to qualitative research?

Professor Gene Feder. Co-founder and Chair of UK Domestic Violence and Health Research Forum and Advisor to UK Government Victims of Violence and Abuse Programme. Intimate partner violence research in east London: many questions, pot-pourri of methods, few answers

JOURNAL CLUB

Journal club is held monthly, and provides an opportunity to review, critique and discuss two journal articles per month. Staff participate by finding and presenting one paper for journal club during the year, on a rostered basis.

Conveners: Della Forster and Helen McLachlan

TEACHING

MCHR staff, students, and associates contribute to undergraduate and postgraduate teaching at La Trobe University, other universities and hospitals. See website for details: www.latrobe.edu.au/mchr/

VISITING ACADEMICS IN 2006

Each year MCHR is fortunate to host a number of visiting scholars. During 2006 four international scholars contributed to ongoing education and other activities at MCHR during their stay. Professor Leah Albers and Dr Abraham Sandri continued their stays until mid-year. During the first semester of 2006 Professor Valerie King from the Department of Family Medicine, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland Oregon, US visited, followed by Professor Gene Feder, Co-founder and Chair of UK Domestic Violence and Health Research Forum, and Advisor to UK Government Victims of Violence and Abuse Programme in second semester.

Publications

ARTICLES IN REFEREED JOURNALS

- J204 Armstrong S, Small R. Screening for postnatal depression: not a simple task. *Aust NZ J Public Health*, 2007;31:57-61.
- J203 McLachlan HL, Forster DA, Yelland J, Rayner J, Lumley J. Is the organisation and structure of hospital postnatal care a barrier to quality care? Findings from a state-wide review in Victoria, Australia. *Midwifery*, 2007; Feb 1 [Epub ahead of print].
- J202 Small R, Lumley J, Yelland J, Brown S. The performance of the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale in English speaking and non-English speaking populations in Australia. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol*, 2007;42:70-78.
- J201 Daly J, Willis K, Small R, Green J, Welch N, Kealy M, Hughes E. A hierarchy of evidence for assessing qualitative health research. *J Clin Epidemiol*, 2007;60:43-9.
- J200 Bruinsma F, Lumley J, Tan J, Quinn M. Precancerous changes in the cervix and risk of subsequent preterm birth. *BJOG*, 2007;114(1):70-80.
- J199 Rayner J, Forster D, McLachlan H, Yelland J, Davey M-A. What are the views and experiences of midwives working in hospital based postnatal care? Findings from a state-wide review of hospital postnatal care in Victoria, Australia. *Midwifery*, 2007;31 Jan [Epub ahead of print].
- J198 Watson L, Lumley J, Rayner J, Potter A. Research interviewers' experience in the Early Births study: qualitative assessment of data collection processes in a case-control study. *Paediatr Perinat Epidemiol*, 2006;21(1):87-94.
- J197 Lumley J, Donohue L. Aiming to increase birth weight: a randomised trial of pre pregnancy information, advice and counselling in inner urban Melbourne. *BMC Public Health*, 2006; 6:299.
- J196 Kune G, Watson L. Colorectal cancer prevention and the dietary micronutrients: folate, methionine, vitamins b6, b12, c, e, selenium and lycopene. *Nutr Cancer*, 2006;56:11-21.
- J195 Yelland J, McLachlan H, Forster D, Rayner J, Lumley J. How is maternal psychosocial health assessed and promoted in the early postnatal period? Findings from a review of hospital postnatal care in Victoria, Australia. *Midwifery*, 2006;Nov 20 [Epub ahead of print].
- J194 Forster D, McLachlan H, Lumley J. Factors associated with continuing to feed any breast milk at six months postpartum in a group of Australian women. *Int Breastfeed J*, 2006;1:18.
- J193 Amir LH, Lumley J. Women's experience of lactational mastitis - 'I have never felt worse'. *Aust Fam Physician*, 2006;35(9):745-747.
- J192 Amir LH. Breastfeeding - managing 'supply' difficulties. *Aust Fam Physician*, 2006; 35(9): 686-699.
- J191 Forster DA, McLachlan HL, Yelland J, Rayner J, Lumley J, Davey M-A. Staffing in postnatal units: is it adequate for the provision of quality care? Staff perspectives from a state-wide review of postnatal care in Victoria, Australia. *BMC Health Serv Res*, 2006;6:83.
- J190 Amir LH, Garland SM, Lumley J. A case-control study of mastitis: nasal carriage of *Staphylococcus aureus*. *BMC Family Practice*, 2006;7:57.
- J189 Forster D, Denning A, Wills G, Bolger M, McCarthy E. Herbal medicine use during pregnancy in a group of Australian women. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth*, 2006;6:21.

- J188 Brown S, Lumley J, McDonald E, Krastev A. Maternal health study: a prospective cohort study of nulliparous women recruited in early pregnancy. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth*, 2006;6:12.
- J187 McLachlan HL, Forster DA. Initial breastfeeding attitudes and practices of women born in Turkey, Vietnam, and Australia after giving birth in Australia. *Int Breastfeed J*, 2006;1:7.
- J186 Small R, Lumley J, Toomey L. Midwife-led debriefing after operative birth: four to six year follow-up of a randomised trial [ISRCTN24648614]. *BMC Medicine*, 2006;4:3.
- J185 Bruinsma F, Venn A, Patton G, Rayner J, Pyett P, Werther G, Jones P, Lumley J. Concern about tall stature during adolescence and depression in later life. *J Affect Disord*, 2006;91(2/3):145-152.

ARTICLES IN PRESS

- Forster DA, McLachlan HL. Breastfeeding initiation: do practices in the birth setting make a difference? (Invited paper). *J Midwifery Womens Health*, In press.
- Forster D, Wills G, Denning A, Bolger M, McCarthy E. The use of folic acid and other vitamins before and during pregnancy in a group of women in Melbourne. *Midwifery*, In press.
- Hegarty K, Brown S, Gunn J, Forster D, Nagle C, Grant B, Lumley J. Women's views and outcomes of an educational intervention designed to enhance psychosocial support for women during pregnancy: Outcomes of education intervention to support women during pregnancy. *Birth*, In press.
- Taft A. Tracking partner violence in families: new guidelines extend opportunities to respond. *Med J Aust*, In press.
- Yelland J, Krastev A, Brown S. Enhancing early postnatal care: Findings from a major reform of maternity care at three Australian hospitals. *Midwifery*, In press

ARTICLES SUBMITTED

- Amir LH, Forster D, Lumley J, McLachlan H. Determinants of mastitis in a cohort of Australian breast feeding women.
- Amir LH. Breastfeeding women deserve quality use of medicines: my podiatrists' tale.
- Amir LH, Donath S. Does maternal obesity have a negative physiological effect on breastfeeding? The epidemiological evidence.
- Beck D, Watson L, Lumley J. The interdependent association of spontaneous and induced abortion in late preterm birth: findings from a cohort of Australian women.
- Green J, Willis K, Hughes E, Small R, Welch N, Gibbs L, Daly J. The contribution of data analysis in the production of high quality evidence from interview-based qualitative research.
- Jordan H, Bruinsma F, Thomson R, Amir LH, Werther G, Venn A. Adolescent exposure to high-dose estrogens and subsequent effects on lactation.
- Kune G, Watson L. Micronutrient attenuation of beer risk in rectal cancer. Folate, methionine, vitamins B6, B12, C, E, selenium and lycopene.
- Panjaitan M, Amir LH, Costa A-M, Rudland E, Tabrizi S. PCR in detection of *Candida albicans* for confirmation of clinical diagnosis of nipple thrush.
- Taft AJ, Watson LF. Termination of pregnancy: associations with partner violence and other factors in a national cohort of young Australian women.

Venn, A Hosmer T, Hosmer D, Bruinsma F, Jones P, Lumley J, Pyett P, Rayner J, Werther G. Estrogen to attenuate growth in tall girls: time to retire an ineffective treatment?

Watson LF, Rayner J-A, Lumley JM. Hospital research and ethics approval for a population-based case-control study of very preterm birth.

Watson LF, Lumley J, Rayner J-A, Potter A. Issues for midwives in the recruitment in hospital of women into a case-control study of very preterm birth.

Watson LF, Taft AJ, Lee L. Associations of self-reported violence with age at menarche, first intercourse and first birth among a national population sample of young Australian women.

EDITORIALS IN REFEREED JOURNALS

Lumley J, Daly J. Reviewing the meaning of 'systematic reviews' [Editorial] *Aust N Z J Public Health*, 2007;31(1):3-4.

Lumley J, Daly J. In praise of critical appraisal. [Editorial] *Aust N Z J Public Health*, 2006;30(4):303-304.

Daly J, Lumley J. Going online - the electronic options. [Editorial] *Aust N Z J Public Health*, 2006;30(3):203-204.

Daly J, Lumley J. A guide to journal submission for first time authors and others. [Editorial] *Aust N Z J Public Health*, 2006; 30(2):103-104.

Lumley J, Daly J. Watching the watchdogs. [Editorial] *Aust N Z J Public Health*, 2006;30(1):3-4.

Amir LH. International Breastfeeding Journal: Introducing a new journal. [Editorial] *Int Breastfeed J*, 2006;1(1):1.

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Rayner J, Lumley J. An exploration of parent-daughter relationships and depression in adulthood within the social context of treating tall stature in adolescent girls over three decades. *Diamond Consortium Colloquium for research Higher Degree Students*. Melbourne, February 2006, npn.

Bruinsma F, Lumley J, Tan J, Quinn M. Pregnancy outcome following cervical dysplasia. *Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand 10th Annual Congress*, Perth, April 2006, p119.

Davey M-A. Caesareans after induction of labour in uncomplicated first births. *Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand 10th Annual Congress*, Perth, April 2006, p84.

Forster D, McLachlan HL, Lumley J. Risk factors for early cessation of breastfeeding: results from a randomised controlled trial. *Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand 10th Annual Congress*, Perth, April 2006, p149.

Lumley J. All you need is rewards and friends: An updated systematic review of interventions to increase smoking cessation in pregnancy. *Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand 10th Annual Congress*, Perth, April 2006, p73.

Yelland J, Forster D, McLachlan H, Rayner J, Lumley J. How are women's psychosocial needs assessed and managed in the early postnatal period? *Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand 10th Annual Congress*, Perth, April 2006, p400.

McLachlan H, Yelland J, Forster D, Rayner J, Lumley J. A patient preference approach to individualised, flexible postnatal care: a randomised controlled trial. *IMPACT Network*, Perth, April 2006, p8.

Small R. Adding migration indicators to routine perinatal data collections: a proposal from Australia. *Euro-PERISTAT: Better Statistics for Better Health for pregnant women and their babies*, Porto, Portugal, June 2006, p16-17.

Rayner J, Lumley J, Pyett P, Venn A, Astbury J. Understanding depression in women of tall stature: generating theory using qualitative methods. *7th International Interdisciplinary Conference*

Advances in Qualitative Methods, Gold Coast, July 2006, p96.

Small R, Daly J, Kealy M, Willis K, Green J, Gibbs L, Thomas S, Welch N, Holt L. (Qualitative research methods group). *Qualitative research into determinants of health: the role of social theory*. Workshop, 37th Public Health Association of Australia Annual Conference, Sydney, September 2006, p66.

Bruinsma F, Lumley J, Tan J, Quinn M. Pregnancy outcome following cervical dysplasia. *Australasian Epidemiological Association Annual Scientific Meeting*, Melbourne, September 2006, p57.

Davey M-A, Sloan M-L, King JF, Lumley J. perinatal data validation - can we do it better? *Australasian Epidemiological Association Annual Scientific Meeting*, Melbourne, September 2006, p125.

Jordan H, Venn A, Bruinsma F, Thomson R, Werther G. Adolescent exposure to high-dose oestrogens and subsequent effects on breastfeeding. *Australasian Epidemiological Association Annual Scientific Meeting*, Melbourne, September 2006, p57.

Lumley J. Vanishing data in routine perinatal collections: missing, truncated and downsized. [Ian Prior Oration] *Australasian Epidemiological Association Annual Scientific Meeting*, Melbourne, September 2006, p18.

Amir LH, Panjaitan M, Costa A-M, Rudland E, Tabrizi S. Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for nipple Candida study, *Australian Lactation Consultants Association National Conference: Breastfeeding: a Human Rights Issue*. Melbourne, October 2006, npn.

Forster D, McLachlan H. Women's views (and experiences) of breastfeeding: positive, negative, or just good for the baby? *Australian Lactation Consultants Association National Conference: Breastfeeding: a Human Rights Issue*. Melbourne, October 2006, p33.

Forster D, McLachlan H, Davey M-A, Lumley J, Gold L, Amir L, Rayner J. Exploring the feasibility of a peer support intervention before testing it in a randomised controlled trial. *Australian Lactation Consultants Association National Conference: Breastfeeding: a Human Rights Issue*. Melbourne, October 2006, p46.

McLachlan H, Forster D, Rayner J, Yelland J, Peters L. Breastfeeding practices in the postnatal wards of hospitals in Victoria: caregivers' views. *Australian Lactation Consultants Association National Conference: Breastfeeding: a Human Rights Issue*. Melbourne, October 2006, p54.

McNair R, Hegarty K, Taft A. Giving voice to the silence: researching the professional relationship between GPs and same sex attracted women. *RACGP Annual Scientific Convention*, Brisbane, October 2006, npn.

Davey M-A Caesarean Section following induction of labour in uncomplicated first births. *ACMI Conference*, Berwick, November 2006, npn.

McNair R, Hegarty K, Taft A. The socio-political climate, identity and disclosure in health care for same sex attracted women. *The International Council on Women's Health Issues Congress*, Sydney, November 2006, http://www.lcwhi2006.com/downloads/program_INOV06.pdf.

Mazzarino M, Forster D, Newton M, McDonald S, Bowditch T, Albers L, Patterson D. WEBS: weighing up the evidence in birth suite. An innovative approach to auditing and changing clinical practice. *Australian College of Midwives Incorporated: Breathing new life into maternity care: working together for better outcomes*, Sydney, December 2006, p3.

Forster D, McLachlan H, Yelland J, Rayner J, Gold L, Rayner J. Improving postnatal care for women: focus groups to inform the development of a patient preference package of postnatal care. *Australian College of Midwives Incorporated: Breathing new life into maternity care: working together for better outcomes*. Sydney, December 2006, p32.

Advocacy & other activities

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVOCACY

This year, Angela Taft, together with Rhonda Small supported a submission by the Royal Women's Hospital to the Transparent Advertising and Notification of Pregnancy Counselling Services Bill 2005 for the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA). Angela attended the Senate hearing to represent PHAA. Together they convened a workshop to coordinate a draft framework for a national evidence based sexual and reproductive health strategy with an emphasis on sexual health and wellbeing and the prevention and reduction of unplanned pregnancy. In addition, they worked together with PHAA, the Royal Women's Hospital and MCHR to organise a public forum for health professionals addressed by Professor Jacqueline Campbell and Professor Gene Feder on Intimate Partner Violence: Meeting Women's Needs in Health Services. This was recorded on both a DVD and a web-cast available at: www.latrobe.edu.au/mchr/phadvocacy

WORKSHOPS

The WOMBAT Collaboration (Women and Babies wellbeing: Action through Trials)

The provision of ongoing education and training in all aspects of randomised controlled trials is a key objective and is fundamental to achieving the aims of the WOMBAT Collaboration.

The WOMBAT Collaboration organised a series of workshops for perinatal researchers and clinicians across five states in 2006. A number of workshops were convened jointly with other agencies such as IMPACT, Australian and New Zealand Neonatal Network (ANZNN), National Institutes of Clinical Studies (NICS) and local hospitals and university departments. Judith Lumley facilitated workshops on Fundamentals of Trial Design and Data Monitoring for RCTs in Adelaide and Perth with other Advisory Group members. There have been an estimated total of 200 participants during 2006 at WOMBAT Collaboration training workshops and education sessions.

See website for links to resources useful for perinatal researchers and clinicians: www.wombatcollaboration.net.

TALKS AND LECTURES

MCHR staff, students, and associates place a high priority on disseminating research findings to consumers, clinicians, and policy makers. In 2006 28 talks and lectures, including two keynote lectures, were given to a variety of audiences both national and international. See website for details:

www.latrobe.edu.au/mchr/

MCHR REFERENCE GROUPS 2006

MCHR projects often have reference groups comprising people with expertise in areas related to the topic of research. Each reference group acts in an advisory capacity to the research team, contributing ideas and advice at all stages of the research process although responsibility for the conduct of the research, its analysis and publication rests with the researchers. Working with reference groups is an important way of receiving valuable input from a wide range of service providers, consumers and researchers and a way of facilitating discussion of our research aims and findings in practice settings. We thank the members of our reference groups for their contribution in 2006. Please see website for details of reference groups: www.latrobe.edu.au/mchr/

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

In 2006, as well as presenting findings, MCHR staff and students attended a variety of national and international conferences that covered a broad range of topics including ethics, methodology, public health, women's health, perinatal and pregnancy issues, migration, or policy. See website for more detail: www.latrobe.edu.au/mchr/

- Lactation Mysteries Revealed, Warrnambool, February 2006 (DF)
- Diamond Consortium Colloquium for Research Higher Degree Students. University of Melbourne, February 2006 (SA, JL, JR, RS)
- Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand IMPACT, Perth, March 2006 (M-AD, DF, MK, JL, HMCL, JY)
- Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand 10th Annual Congress, Perth, April 2006 (FB, M-AD, DF, MK, JL, HMCL, JY)
- Caesarean section forum, Monash Medical Centre, Melbourne, July 2006 (M-AD, MK)
- General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference "Optimizing Impact, Perth, June 2006 (AT)
- National Medicines Symposium, Canberra, June 2006 (LA)
- Gender and Health Inequalities. Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, University of Melbourne, June 2006 (JR)
- Euro-PERISTAT and the European Commission Public Health Program, Better statistics for better health for pregnant women and their babies, Porto, Portugal, June 2006 (RS)
- Australian Nursing Federation Midwifery Conference, Melbourne, August 2006 (SB)
- Aboriginal Early Childhood: 'Improving life chances of Aboriginal children from birth to 8 years', Adelaide, August 2006 (SB, JY)
- Public Health Association of Australia, 37th Annual Conference, Sydney, September 2006 (JL, RS, AT)
- Australasian Epidemiological Association 15th Annual Scientific Meeting, Melbourne, September 2006 (SB, FB, M-AD, DF, JL, JR, AT, LW)
- Australian Lactation Consultants Association National Conference, Breastfeeding: a Human Rights Issue, Melbourne, October 2006 (LA, DF, HM)
- Australian College of Midwives Incorporated: Breathing new life into maternity care: working together for better outcomes, Sydney, December 2006 (DF)

COURSES ATTENDED

MCHR staff and students endeavour to continue their education and extend their skills by participating in training and courses throughout the year. In 2006 a variety of ongoing education was undertaken at all levels within Australia and overseas.

- Introduction to Qualitative Research Techniques. Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated, Canberra (LA)
- Orientation to Research, Language & Academic Skills (ESL) workshops. La Trobe University March 2006 (TS)
- Fundamentals of Trial Design: WOMBAT. Adelaide, March 2006 (MK)
- Rationale for randomised control trials (RCTs): WOMBAT, Perth, March 2006 (MK)
- Data Monitoring for randomised control trials (RCTs): WOMBAT, Perth, March 2006 (M-AD)
- Introduction to regression models, University of Bristol, UK, March 2006 (SB, EMcD, AT)

Analysis of longitudinal studies, University of Bristol, UK, March 2006 (SB, AT)

Essential methods in biostatistics and epidemiology, The George Institute, Melbourne, May 2006 (DF)

Short Course in Perinatal and Reproductive Epidemiology, MCHR, La Trobe University, September 2006 (SA, SP)

Principles and Methods of Epidemiologic Research Course, Menzies Institute, Hobart, September 2006 (DF)

Introduction to clinical trials/Putting evidence into practice: WOMBAT/IMPACT, Sydney, November 2006 (MK)

Critical Appraisal workshop WOMBAT/NICS, Melbourne, November 2006 (MK)

Diamond Consortium Research Higher Degree Student Meeting, University of Melbourne, December 2006 (SA)

Analysis of categorical data, Statistical Consulting Centre, University of Melbourne, December 2006 (LA)

Principles and Practice of Higher Education, La Trobe University, December 2006 (M-AD, MK)

Long Document and Thesis Formatting Course, La Trobe University, December 2006 (M-AD, MK, JR)

REVIEWING PAPERS

In 2006 staff and students at MCHR were invited to review papers for 31 national and international peer-review journals, including:

Archives of Women's Mental Health (RS)

Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health (LA, SB, FB, DF, JL, MK, JR, RS, AT, LW, JY)

American Journal of Epidemiology (AT)

Australian Journal of Primary Health Care (AT)

Birth (MK, JL)

BMC Medicine (JL)

BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth (JL)

BMC Public Health (LA, JL)

BMC Women's Health (SB)

BMJ (DF)

Contemporary Clinical Trials 2006 (LW)

Drug and Alcohol Review (LA)

Human Reproduction (FB)

International Breastfeeding Journal (M-AD, JR, JY)

International Journal of Nursing Studies (JY)

International Journal of Reproduction (M-AD)

Journal of Human Lactation (LA)

Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health (DF)

Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology (SB, JR, RS)

Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology (JL)

Journal of Sociology (AT)

The Lancet (JL)

Maternal and Child Health Journal (SB)

Medical Journal of Australia (LA)

Midwifery (SB, DF, JY)

Pediatrics (FB)

Public Health Nursing (RS)

Public Health Nutrition (LA)

Scandinavian Journal of Public Health (RS)

Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology (JY)

Women and Birth (DF)

COMMITTEES

MCHR staff participate on a number of committees and advisory groups. These committees deal with professional, educational, policy and social and ethics issues. See website for more detail: www.latrobe.edu.au/mchr/

Australasian Epidemiological Association Annual Scientific Meeting, Scientific Organising Committee 2006 (JR, LW)

Australasian Epidemiological Association Annual Scientific Meeting Breakfast Sessions 2006 (LW)

Australasian Epidemiology Association Council, (JR, M-AD)

Australian Lactation Consultants Association, National Biennial Conference, Melbourne 2006, Chair, Scientific Committee (LA)

Diamond Consortium Steering Committee (SB)

Infertility Treatment Authority Victoria, Registers Panel (FB) (until July 2006).

International Confederation of Midwives Research Standing Committee, Chair of Networking Section (DF)

La Trobe University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Higher Degrees Committee, (RS)

La Trobe University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Research Committee (SB)

La Trobe University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Research Ethics Committee (JR)

Melbourne IVF/Royal Women's Hospital Reproductive Services, Psychosocial Research Committee (FB)

Mercy Health and Aged Care, Research Ethics Committee (DF)

Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand, 11th Annual Congress, Melbourne 2007, Scientific Organising Committee (LA)

Public Health Association, National co-convenors, Women's Health Special Interest Group and Committee, Victorian Branch (RS, AT)

Royal Women's Hospital Research Committee (M-AD)

MEMBERSHIPS OF EDITORIAL BOARDS

Australasian Epidemiologist, Editors (JR, M-AD, FB)

International Breastfeeding Journal, Editor-in-Chief (LA)

International Breastfeeding Journal, Editorial Board (DF, JL, HM, JY)

International Journal of Nursing Studies, Editorial Board (JY)

Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Editorial Board (SB, RS)

Midwifery, Editorial Board (SB)

Journal of Human Lactation, Editorial Board (LA)

The Lancet (JL)

ASSESSING RESEARCH GRANTS

Diamond Consortium (SB, JL)

Healthway, Western Australia (LA, JL).

La Trobe University, Faculty of Health Sciences (SB, JL)

National Health and Medical Research Council Project Grants 2005 (AT, FB, JL, JY)

National Health and Medical Reserve Council Program Grants (JL)

New Zealand Health Research Council (AT)

THESIS EXAMINATION

Advanced Medical Science, University of Melbourne (JR)

Honors Thesis, La Trobe University (JR)

PhD, University of Auckland (JL)

Staff & students

STAFF

MCHR brings together a team of researchers with qualifications and experience in: epidemiology, women's health policy, psychology, education, historical and social research, health economics, biomedical research, statistics, consumer advocacy, medicine, nursing and midwifery.

Lisa Amir MBBS, MMed(WomHlth), PhD, IBCLC



Lisa is a medical graduate and an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. She was awarded her PhD on the topic of mastitis, supervised by Judith Lumley, in October 2005. She has received a NHMRC Health Professional Fellowship for 2006-2009 to continue working at MCHR.

Maggie Flood RN, RM, GradCertHlthSc(ClinDataManag), DipA(ProfWrit&Edit)



Maggie joined MCHR in 2000 and since then has worked on the Survey of Recent Mothers, PRISM, and HARP studies. She joined the *Maternal health study* team in mid-2005.

Shirley Bilardi BA, DipEd(Sec), GradDipArtTher



Shirley has worked in various community, health, media and educational roles. She joined MCHR in 2006 as a part-time administration officer and is currently completing a Masters in Art Therapy at La Trobe University.

Della Forster RN, RM, DipAppSc, BHlthSc, MMid, PhD



Della joined MCHR in April 1999 as joint project co-ordinator of the *ABFAB* breastfeeding trial. Della completed her PhD in 2005. Current research interests: postnatal care and volunteer peer support for breastfeeding. She works part time as a midwifery consultant at the Royal

Women's Hospital.

Liesje Brice BA, BSc(Hons)



Liesje joined MCHR in 2001 while completing her undergraduate studies and has worked on several different projects since that time. In 2006 she was part of the *Maternal health study* team working as a research assistant.

Kim Hoang BA SSc, GradDipInterp&Transl



Kim joined MCHR in 2005 as a Vietnamese Project Officer in the *MOSAIC* team. Kim's current work tasks include research and community development.

Stephanie Brown BA(Hons), PHD



Stephanie had a background in women's health policy and consumer advocacy before joining MCHR in 1991. She has had a major role in the conduct of three population-based surveys of recent mothers in Victoria, and is currently conducting a longitudinal study of women's health after childbirth.

Michelle Kealy RN, RM, MPHIC



Michelle joined MCHR in September 2002 as a full-time PhD candidate. She is currently writing up her study of women's experiences of caesarean section. Michelle worked part-time on the *HARP* and *MOSAIC* projects prior to becoming the Vic/Tas coordinator for the *WOMBAT*

Collaboration in Jan 2006.

Fiona Bruinsma BSc, GradDipAppPsych, MAppSc(Res)



During Fiona's 10 years at MCHR she has worked on a variety of studies including: prevalence of obstetric ultrasound; cancer after infertility and IVF, women's experiences of maternity care in Victoria and the Tall Girls study. Fiona's most recent work has investigated pregnancy outcomes after

cervical dysplasia. During 2006 Fiona continued on maternity leave and also undertook coursework as part of the Professional Doctorate in Public Health.

Monique Keel BA, GradDipAppPsych, MPPsych



Monique Keel joined *MOSAIC* as a researcher in mid 2006. Prior to this she worked as a researcher and in service delivery in the areas of family violence and sexual assault. She completed a Masters degree in Psychology (Community and Environmental) in 1999.

Mary-Ann Davey RN, RM, DipAppSc, BEd, GradDipSoc(SocSur&ResTech)



Mary-Ann is a part-time doctoral student at MCHR. Her interests are pregnancy and birth, breastfeeding and developing her skills in biostatistics. Mary-Ann has worked in health research for the last 13 years after a background in midwifery, and maternal and child health. She spends the rest of her

week as Epidemiologist to the Consultative Council on Obstetric & Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity.

Judith Lumley MA, MBBS, PhD, GradDipChildDev, FAFPHM, FFPH (UK)



Judith is an epidemiologist and public health physician, with long-standing research interests in reproductive and perinatal health and health services. She developed and then managed the Victorian Perinatal Data Collection Unit (1981-1994), and chaired the Victorian Ministerial Review of Birthing Services (1988-90). Judith has been Director of MCHR since its foundation in 1991.

Ellie McDonald BAppSc(Hons)



Ellie completed a Bachelor of Applied Science (Hons), majoring in psychology and psychophysiology at Swinburne University in 1997. She joined MCHR in August 2002 as project co-ordinator and data manager for the *Maternal health study*.

Sue Perlon RN, RM, BNrsg



Sue joined MCHR in December 2005 as part of the *Maternal health study* team. She has been a midwife since 1990, predominantly working at Mercy Hospital for Women as a clinician, manager and project manager. Sue commenced a Master of Public Health at La Trobe University in 2004.

Catherine Plunkett BA



Catherine joined *MOSAIC* as a coordinator in September 2006. She combines this role with family violence policy work for the Federation of Community Legal Centres. Catherine has seventeen years experience in service delivery, management and structural advocacy in the area of family violence.

Jo-Anne Rayner RN, BNrsg, GradDipWomHlth, MWomHlth(Res)



Jo joined MCHR in 2000 as part of the Tall Girls Study team and has since been the project coordinator of the Early Births Study (2001-2004) and the *PinC* Study 2004-2005). She is a full-time student supported by a NHMRC PhD scholarship and a chief investigator on three postnatal care projects.

Rhonda Small BA, DipEd, GradDipLib, GradDipEpid, PhD



Rhonda worked initially in education, welfare and librarianship before moving into public health research. She has worked at MCHR since its foundation in 1991. Her research interests include women's views and experiences of maternity care, cross-cultural issues in perinatal research, maternal depression and women's health and recovery following operative birth.

Angela Taft BA, DipEd, MPH, PhD



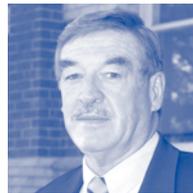
Angela's research interests include the health impact of violence against women and children and reproductive health. She is principal investigator of the *MOSAIC* project and an evaluation of emergency contraception over the counter in Australia. She is an associate investigator with the Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health, an honorary fellow of the Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne, and with Rhonda Small, national co-convenor of PHAA's Women's Health SIG.

Michelle Toomey



Michelle joined MCHR in 2006 as part of the administration team after three years travel in Europe. She has previously worked in the automotive, healthcare and viticulture industries.

Paul Toomey DipAcctg, GradDipCost&Mgmt, CIS



Paul completed graduate and post-graduate studies in accounting and management while on a cadetship with the Commonwealth public service in Sydney. After a management role in a national finance corporation and a professional advisory services career Paul commenced at MCHR in 2003.

Lyn Watson BSc, MSc



Lyn Watson has been the statistician at MCHR since 1992 and has been involved in many projects including *PRISM* and *EcoPRISM*, the Multi-centre study of cancer after infertility and analysis of the Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health. In 2006 she has been a full-time PhD student working on the Early Births Case-Control Study.

Jan Wiebe DipPhy, BHlthEd, MWomHlth



With a background in physiotherapy and women's health promotion in community settings, Jan joined MCHR in 2005 to work as a research officer with the *MOSAIC* project. Her interests are in primary health care and translation of evidence into practice in health promotion.

Hannah Woolhouse BA (Hons)



Hannah joined MCHR in 1999 to work on the *PRISM* project. Since this time she has worked in a variety of administrative and data management roles at MCHR. In 2006 she worked with the *Maternal health study*. Hannah is combining part-time work at MCHR with the completion of a Professional Doctorate in counselling psychology.

Vivianne Woska BSW



Vivianne joined MCHR as the *MOSAIC* mentor mother coordinator in October 2005. This position has allowed Vivianne to work in an area that combines her interests in community development and family violence prevention strategies.

Vicki Wyatt AdvCertOffAdmin, DipUnivAdmin



Vicki worked in various health and educational organisations before joining MCHR in 1997 as Administrative Officer. In 2006 Vicki took up a position with the Office of Events and Ceremonies at La Trobe University.

Jane Yelland BAppSc, PhD



Jane joined MCHR in 1991 following her involvement in the Victorian Ministerial Review of Birthing Services. She has worked on a variety of projects since that time including the Mothers in a New Country (MINC) study, and the evaluation of major reform to maternity care at a Melbourne health network (EPOCS).

Jane was awarded her PhD in 2005 and is a co-investigator on the three *PinC* postnatal projects.

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS AND PROJECT SUPPORT STAFF

Marita Baum RN, RM

Marita joined the *Maternal health study* in April 2004. Marita also works in quality/data management in midwifery at Southern Health.

MCHR STUDENTS 2006

Sue Armstrong Dip Soc Stud, BSW, MSW

Sue, who has a background in community-based research and social work in health settings, lives and works in rural Victoria. She is currently studying full time supported by a La Trobe University scholarship. Her PhD project is about women's experience of being screened for postnatal depression and is supervised by Rhonda Small.

Melissa Hobbs RN, BA, MPH

Melissa joined MCHR in July 2006 as a full-time PhD student. Her doctoral research, which is being supported by an Australian Postgraduate Award (Industry), is a study of the provision of the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) over-the-counter in Australia. Melissa completed a Master of Public Health at the University of NSW in 1997 and has a research background in women's health.

Touran Shafiei RM, BMid

Touran completed a Bachelor of Midwifery from Iran in 1994 and worked as a midwife for a number of years in Iran. She enrolled full-time in a Master of Applied Science (Research) in February 2006 and is supervised by Rhonda Small and Helen McLachlan.

VISITING STUDENTS 2006

Mary-Anne Measey

Mary-Anne joined MCHR in March 2006. She is undertaking research into unexplained fetal death as a PhD student of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth and is supported by a NHMRC scholarship. Her supervisors include Dr Adrian Charles (perinatal pathologist.), Dr Edouard Tursan d'Espaignet (research fellow) and Professor Nick deKlerk (statistician).

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES AND COLLABORATORS 2006

Professor Jill Astbury, Chair of Psychology, Victoria University, Melbourne

Dr Chris Bessell, Clinical Risk Management, Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne

Dr Mary-Ann Biro, Manager - Midwifery Primary Care, Maternity Services, Monash Medical Centre Clayton

Professor Shaun Brennecke, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Royal Women's Hospital, University of Melbourne

Professor Robert Burrows, Maternal Fetal Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Monash University

Adjunct Associate Professor Jeanne Daly, MCHR, La Trobe University

Dr Lisa Donohue, Manager, Nursing and Midwifery Education, Western Health

Ms Anne Fleming, Honorary Research Fellow MCHR and Research Midwife

Associate Professor Anita Gagnon, School of Nursing, McGill University, Canada

Professor Suzanne Garland, Director, Department of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne

Ms Lisa Gold, Lecturer, School of Public Health, La Trobe University

Professor Jane Gunn, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne

Associate Professor Jane Halliday, Public Health Genetics Unit, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital, University of Melbourne

Associate Professor Kelsey Hegarty, Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne

Associate Professor James King, Chair, Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity, Victoria Department of Human Services and Consultant in Perinatal Medicine, Royal Women's Hospital, University of Melbourne

Ms Mary-Anne Measey, Visiting scholar and PhD student of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, University of Western Australia

Dr Helen McLachlan, Lecturer, Clinical

School of Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Studies, La Trobe University

Ms Creina Mitchell, Lecturer, School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University

Dr George Patton, VicHealth Professor of Adolescent Mental Health, Royal Children's Hospital, University of Melbourne

Dr Priscilla Pyett, VicHealth Public Health Research Fellow, Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Research and Community Development Unit, Centre for the Study of Health and Society, University of Melbourne

Dr Michael Quinn, Gynaecological Oncologist, Royal Women's Hospital, University of Melbourne

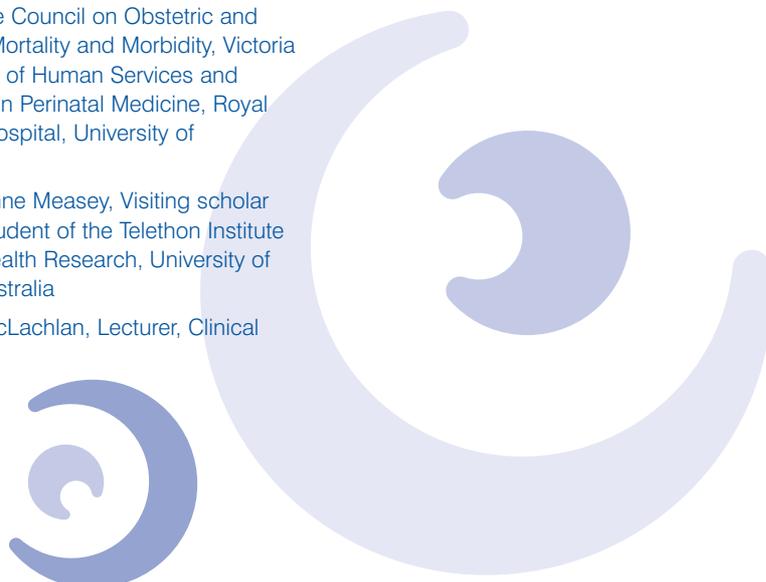
Dr Dick Sloman, Honorary Research Fellow, MCHR and Honorary Fellow, VicHealth Koori Health Research and Community Development Unit, Centre for the Study of Health and Society, University of Melbourne

Dr Jeffrey Tan, Gynaecological Oncologist, Royal Women's Hospital, University of Melbourne

Associate Professor Alison Venn, Menzies Research Institute, University of Tasmania

Dr Peter Wein, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Royal Women's Hospital, University of Melbourne

Professor George Werther, Director, Centre for Hormone Research, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Department of Endocrinology and Diabetes, Royal Children's Hospital, University of Melbourne



New grants, scholarships and awards

NHMRC Capacity Building in Population Health Grant

Building public health capacity for complex questions, complex settings, complex interactions

Judith Lumley, Stephanie Brown, Jane Gunn, Rhonda Small, Jeanne Daly, Christine MacArthur

2007-2012: \$2,333,750

NHMRC Project Grant

Women's Evaluation of a randomised controlled trial for Abuse and Violence in General Practice

Kelsey Hegarty, Jane Gunn, Angela Taft A, Gene Feder, Jill Astbury, Judith Lumley and Stephanie Brown

2007-2009: \$654,525

NHMRC Project Grant

Caseload midwifery for women at low risk of medical complications: a randomised controlled trial

Helen McLachlan, Della Forster, Mary-Ann Davey, Judith Lumley, Tina Farrell, Jeremy Oats, Lisa Gold, and Ulla Waldenström

2007- 2010: \$583,125.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research International Opportunities Program (Collaborative Research Project Grant)

International comparisons of the perinatal health and care of migrant women

Anita Gagnon, Maureen Heaman, Rhonda Small, Donna Stewart, and Melitza Zencovich

2006-2007: \$100,000 [CAN]

NHMRC Health Professional Research Fellowship

Lisa Amir

2006-2009: \$154,350

NHMRC Public Health Postgraduate Scholarships

Early Births: A case-control study of very preterm birth

Lyn Watson

2006: \$21, 231

Perinatal outcomes following treatment for cervical dysplasia

Fiona Bruinsma

2005-2007: \$47, 092

An exploration of parent-daughter relationships and depression in adulthood within the social context of treating tall stature in adolescent girls over three decades

Jo Rayner

2005-2007: \$52, 618

Diamond Consortium Seed Funding

The experience of depression after birth and views about primary care services among Persian-speaking women in Melbourne

Touran Shafiei, Rhonda Small and Helen McLachlan

2006: \$7,475

Women's attitudes to screening for postnatal depression in a rural Australian community

Susan Armstrong and Rhonda Small

2006: \$3,875

La Trobe University Faculty of Health Sciences Postgraduate Support Grants

Sue Armstrong, Melissa Hobbs, Michelle Kealy, Jo Rayner, Touran Shafiei, Lyn Watson

2006: \$400.00 (each)

Australian Association of Academic General Practice: Distinguished Paper Award

GP management of the whole family when intimate partner violence (IPV) is present: developing international consensus guidelines when evidence is rare

Angela Taft

Mother & Child Health Research

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ISSN 1038-1066

Design and formatting

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