

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Perinatal oral health guidelines

Dr Ajesh George, Professor Maree Johnson and Professor Hannah Dahlen from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Professor Jennifer Reath and Professor Andrew Korda from the School of Medicine and Associate Professor Sameer Bhole from Sydney and South Western Sydney Local Health District Oral Health Services and Sydney Dental Hospital together with Australian Dental Association (NSW Branch); Centre for Oral Health Strategy NSW and Philips Electronics Australia have been awarded a UWS Research Partnership grant to develop perinatal oral health guidelines for dentists and prenatal care providers in Australia.

'Poor maternal oral health can have a negative impact on the health of the mother and child', says Dr George. 'Unfortunately, women in Australia seldom seek dental care during pregnancy. This could be attributed to the lack of consensus among health professionals towards perinatal oral health care. The overall aim of this research program is to develop perinatal oral health guidelines in Australia. To achieve this, preliminary work needs to be undertaken in this area. The objectives of this study include establishing an expert panel and exploring the perceptions of dentists and prenatal care providers in NSW towards perinatal oral health.'

The research team will conduct a survey of a random sample of 400 dentists, midwives, general practitioners, obstetricians and gynaecologists practicing in NSW. The survey data will be analysed using statistical analysis software. The content of the survey was developed through a review of the literature, policy statements and other international guidelines and expert opinions regarding dental care during pregnancy.



The findings from this study will provide vital information about the current knowledge, attitudes and practices of dentists and prenatal care providers in Australia regarding perinatal oral health. It will provide the impetus for state and national change processes to begin regarding perinatal oral health. This project has the potential to improve the oral health of Australian women and their infants.

Project Title: Developing perinatal oral health guidelines for dentists and prenatal care providers in Australia

Funding has been set at: \$29,940

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