

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Increasing Health Literacy for Australian-Vietnamese Women

Dr Sansnee Jirojwong, Dr Sharon Hillege and Associate Professor Virginia Schmied of the School of Nursing and Midwifery with Professor Pranee LiamPuttong of Latrobe University are developing multimedia educational materials to help Vietnamese-Australian women with gestational diabetes to improve their self-management of this condition. This project is supported by funding from the Department of Health and Ageing through the 'Sharing Health Care Initiative'.

'Gestational diabetes is a significant issue for some pregnant women in Australia,' states Dr Jirojwong. 'There is a risk of problems occurring for both mother and child around the time of birth and a risk of them developing type 2 diabetes later in life. Vietnamese-Australian women in particular are in a higher risk group for developing gestational diabetes - a condition that is difficult enough to understand and manage without the added complication of language barriers and cultural differences. Gestational diabetes educational material should take into account cultural sensitivities, cultural attitudes and language in our modern multicultural environment. This project aims to develop educational material that is particularly culturally fitting with the Vietnamese-Australian culture, assisting women to increase their self-management of gestational diabetes.'

Multimedia materials will be developed in Vietnamese and English in consultation with Vietnamese-Australian women who have already successfully managed gestational diabetes in their pregnancy. Lifestyle factors that need to be managed include anxiety, diet, exercise, rest and blood-sugar levels. Health professionals from Diabetes Australia and the NSW Multicultural Communication Service will also make contributions to the educational materials.



The materials will be tested for acceptable content and modes of delivery by other Vietnamese-Australian women with gestational diabetes who were not involved in the educational material development.

Successfully managing gestational diabetes will not only reduce risks to the health of the mother and her child in pregnancy and birth, but can also be a preventative measure against mother or child developing further health problems in the future, making for a healthier population and reducing health care costs to the community.

Project Title: Increasing health literacy among Vietnamese women with gestational diabetes
Funding has been set at: \$84,881
Contact Details: s.jirojwong@uws.edu.au
<http://www.uws.edu.au/nursing>
December 2009