

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

OSPREY Flies High for Maternity Health Services

Professor Louisa Jorm and Dr Hilary Bambrick from the School of Medicine, in collaboration with researchers from the Universities of Sydney and Western Australia, the Sax Institute and eminent national and international mentors, are leading the OSPREY research program (Outcomes, Services and Policy for the Reproductive and Early Years), which will use linked health service data for research to inform improvements in health services for mothers, babies and children. This research program was funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

'Over 265,000 women give birth each year in Australia and significant health services are devoted to reproductive health, pregnancy, birth and child health,' says Professor Jorm. 'Obstetric practices have changed substantially over the last ten years and the impact of early life factors on the subsequent health of individuals needs to be investigated. For example, the longer-term outcomes of assisted reproductive technologies and other gynaecological procedures for women and babies are largely unknown and the health care needs of urban Aboriginal babies, children and adolescents have not been sufficiently researched. The OSPREY program will build human capacity, skills and methods in order to use linked health service data for research using large population-based samples. This will inform improvements in health services for mothers, babies and children, with a specific focus on Aboriginal children.'

There are five "themes of research" for this large multi-disciplinary project: safety and quality of hospital care for mothers and children, women's reproductive and health services, quality of care for Aboriginal children, novel statistical analytical methods for linked health service data and



translating research into policy and practice. The research team will examine a wide variety of aspects of health service use and outcomes, including equity of service provision to women and children, demand for such services and the medium to long-term health of mothers.

The OSPREY program will provide research training for 4 PhD candidates and 5 postdoctoral fellows and draw on a cohort of national and international mentors to enhance the research capabilities and skills of investigators and research officers. This will substantially boost Australia's capacity for health services research focused on a "healthy start to life" and pave the way for a healthier Australian population.

Project Title: OSPREY: Building capacity for research to improve health services for mothers, babies and children
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