

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Motherhood and fertility planning among young Aboriginal mothers

Professor Jane Ussher and Professor Janette Perz from the School of Medicine, together with Cate Osborn from Gunawirra Ltd., have been awarded a UWS Research Partnerships grant to examine the construction and experience of motherhood of young Aboriginal women attending an early intervention program for Indigenous mothers and babies.

'It is widely recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women experience poorer health than other Australian women, including a higher incidence of a range of chronic illnesses and mental health problems', says Professor Ussher. 'The reproductive health of Aboriginal women is related to the mental health and wellbeing of mothers and their children, and a matter of concern for health providers and policy makers due to the disproportionately high rates of poor pregnancy outcomes relative to other Australian women.'

This project will use a multi-layered qualitative approach. Researchers will conduct stakeholder meetings and participant observation of an early intervention program. The researchers will also conduct one-to-one interviews with women attending the program and health professionals involved with program delivery.

The project will lead to a greater understanding of Aboriginal women's reproductive health. As well as contributing to our knowledge about Aboriginal women's experiences and construction of early motherhood, this research will have practical benefits. The research will inform the development of policy and early interventions to be offered by Gunawirra. Overall, the findings will inform policy and practice associated with improving Aboriginal



women's subjective wellbeing, and health professional training and supervision in the field of Aboriginal maternal care.

Project title: Experiences and constructions of motherhood and fertility planning amongst young Aboriginal mothers attending an early intervention program: a comparison of perspectives.

Total funding received: \$50,000

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