

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Oral health for Aboriginal families

Dr Ajesh George from the Family and Community Health Research Group is leading a research team in partnership with University of New South Wales, South Western Sydney Local Health District and the University of Sydney to develop, implement and evaluate a nursing initiated program in South-Western Sydney promoting the oral health of Aboriginal pregnant women and their children. This research is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health.

'In recent years increasing importance has been placed on promoting oral health during pregnancy and early childhood', explains Dr George. 'Unfortunately, very little emphasis has been placed on the oral health of mothers during pregnancy in Australia with most of the attention being focused solely on infant oral health. This is of particular concern for Australian Aboriginal women who have significantly higher rates of poor oral health than non-Aboriginal women. This prevalence of poor oral health is evident in Aboriginal children as well. The aim of this study is to develop, implement and evaluate a nursing initiated perinatal oral health program in South-Western Sydney to improve the oral health of pregnant Aboriginal women and their children.'

The program, which will be initiated by child and family health nurses and followed up by dentists, will incorporate aspects of existing interventions and resources to promote oral health. Nurses will be involved in the provision of oral health education, assessment and referrals in the period before and after giving birth to promote maternal and infant oral health. The program will be incorporated into a larger study - the Bulundidi Gudaga trial, which is due to shortly commence at Campbelltown Hospital. The aim of the Bulundidi Gudaga study is to determine the effectiveness of Sustained Structured Nurse Home Visiting (SSNHV) in improving the health and development of Aboriginal children.



The outcomes of this project will support the oral health of pregnant Aboriginal women and their children (access to screening and treatment, and increased preventive behaviours) through the development of a perinatal oral health program delivered in South-Western Sydney.

Project Title: Development of a perinatal oral health program for Aboriginal families in South-Western Sydney

Funding has been set at: \$16,410

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Research Team

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