

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

A Healthy Start

Associate Professor Virginia Schmied and Mr Stephen McNally from the Family and Community Health Research Group, and Professor Annemarie Hennessy, School of Medicine, together with the Sydney South West Area Health Service have been awarded a UWS Research Partnership Program grant to design a new model of postnatal care.

'Previous studies have identified a low level of satisfaction with hospital-based postnatal care. We will design and pilot a new model of postnatal care to meet the needs of women, infants and families using hospital maternity services', says Associate Professor Schmied. 'The model will be designed to improve parenting confidence, breastfeeding outcomes, and women's knowledge of postnatal health issues.'

The research team will survey women who give birth at south west Sydney hospitals over an 8 week period asking them about how they perceive the quality of care, and seeking information about maternal health, breastfeeding outcomes and their parenting confidence. Focus groups of postnatal women will be carried out to gain an understanding of women's perceptions of current postnatal services and how these may be improved to better meet their needs. Complementing the discussions with postpartum women, focus groups will be held with midwives who are working in the postnatal area to understand midwives' perceptions of the goal of postnatal midwifery care, and what they are required to do to achieve those goals. Other health professionals will also be interviewed to identify any perceived gaps in services or practices, draw out ideas for improving services and identify possible barriers to change.



The findings of this study will facilitate policy and practice development in this area, particularly by identifying what women and their families need from postnatal care and by actively engaging midwives in the development of the new model. This will lead to better parenting practices and improve the experience of becoming a mother.

Project Title: A healthy start: A study to design and pilot a new model of postnatal care in south west Sydney

Funding has been set at: \$5,068

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For more information on UWS Research Partnership Program, check:

http://www.uws.edu.au/research/ors/funding_opportunities/internal_research_grants