



# Mercy Public Hospitals Inc Research Report 2008



Compassion Respect Innovation Stewardship Teamwork

# Mercy Public Hospitals Inc Research Report 2008

Prepared by the  
Academic Research and Development Committee, Mercy Health

**Our vision is to build an enduring capacity and passion to  
serve those with special needs.**

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## Message from the Mercy Health CEO and Chairman



John Ballard, CEO



Julien O'Connell, Chairman

On behalf of the Board of Mercy Public Hospitals Inc we have great pleasure in introducing the inaugural *Mercy Public Hospitals Inc Research Report*.

This report covers key clinical research undertaken during 2008 as well as the academic and professional achievements of our talented teams. It includes projects conducted in collaboration with other organisations, showing the strength of our partnerships and the depth of our research activity.

Mercy Public Hospitals Inc is a vital part of Mercy Health, supporting our mission to deliver health, aged care and community services to all in need.

Mercy Health is a community serving organisation owned and operated by the Sisters of Mercy, Melbourne Congregation, providing acute and subacute hospital care, specialist women's health, early parenting, palliative and home care services, mental health, residential and community aged care.

With a commitment to care first, Mercy Health draws on a diverse range of specialist skills and technologies to support people at any stage of life. We provide direct care services to nearly half a million people every year, connecting with one in 20 Victorian families and a growing number in southern New South Wales.

Our vision is to build an enduring capacity to serve those with special needs. This can only be achieved through the skills, talents, commitment and good will of our people. Our approach is guided by the values reflected in the behaviour of Mercy Health people: compassion, respect, innovation, stewardship and teamwork.

Through this report we gain some insight into the important contribution being made by our researchers. We congratulate them all and thank them for their dedication to improving health care for all members of our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Ballard".

**John Ballard**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Mercy Public Hospitals Inc and  
Mercy Health

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julien O'Connell".

**Julien O'Connell**  
Mercy Health Chairman



## Associate Professor David Allen, Chairman Academic Research and Development Committee

In 2008 the Academic Research and Development Committee was given the task of co-ordinating the first Mercy Public Hospitals Inc Research Report. I would like to thank the various departments from Mercy Hospital for Women, Werribee Mercy Hospital, Mercy Mental Health and Mercy Palliative Care for their contributions at relatively short notice. I also thank my executive assistant, Vicky Karitinos, for her assistance in collating these responses.

Many different institutions and funding bodies have supported research at Mercy Health hospitals and we are grateful for this. I would like to mention the Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies, which has been a consistent supporter for many years and, more recently, the Mercy Health Foundation and Austin Pathology for their ongoing contributions.

University departments contribute much to our research output. We are especially proud of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Melbourne located within Mercy Hospital for Women.

Their research capability has grown enormously over the years and now has well established programs and projects. The La Trobe University unit is increasing activity and encouraging research in the nursing sector. The subspecialty gynaecology departments at Mercy Hospital for Women are small but productive as well.

I hope that the 2009 Research Report will be bigger and better than the inaugural publication and that we will continue to grow, increasing our research output and collaborations.

Members of the Academic Research and Development Committee 2008:  
*Associate Professor David Allen (Chair), Dr Jack Bergman, Ms Judy Czuchnowski, Ms Anita Gonvidan, Dr Genevieve Green, Ms Julie Hammett, Ms Jackie Keane, Professor Susan McDonald, Sr Helen Monkivitch, Professor Michael Permezel, Dr Andrew Watkins*



## Professor Peter Carpenter, Chairman Mercy Health Human Research Ethics Committee

Mercy Health promotes research throughout the organisation, including innovative projects and clinical trials, across a range of areas such as obstetrics, gynaecology, mental health, paediatrics, reproductive medicine, aged care, midwifery, nursing and palliative care.

The Mercy Health Human Research Ethics Committee operates to ensure that any research projects, studies or clinical trials conducted within Mercy Health are undertaken within the guidelines of the 2007 National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, the Catholic Health Australia guidelines, the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority guidelines for clinical trials and the Health Privacy Principles of the Health Records Act 2001 (Victoria). All research projects, studies or trials conducted within Mercy Health must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Human Research Ethics Committee meets bimonthly, reports to the Board of Mercy Health on a bimonthly basis and to the National Health and Medical Research Council & Health Services Commissioner

annually. Expedited review is available for low risk research, quality assurance or audit activities within Mercy Health. The Human Research Ethics Committee comprises 14 members from within and without Mercy Health with a range of expertise and research experience in medicine, pharmacology, the law, midwifery, ethics, the social and behavioural sciences, administration as well as representatives of the community. Each new research project is facilitated by a member of the Human Research Ethics Committee prior to consideration by the committee.

In 2008 the Human Research Ethics Committee examined over 50 research projects, studies and clinical trials, approved changes to a large number of ongoing research studies and examined regular progress reports on previously approved studies. A number of the new projects examined by the committee were associated with students undertaking research higher degrees at universities, including the University of Melbourne, La Trobe University, Monash University and the University of Ballarat.



## Mr Stephen Cornelissen, Chief Operating Officer, Mercy Health

Mercy Public Hospitals Inc provides a range of public health services to Victorians through Mercy Hospital for Women, Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre, Werribee Mercy Hospital and Mercy Mental Health.

Mercy Public Hospitals Inc is part of Mercy Health, a not-for-profit organisation owned by the Sisters of Mercy. Mercy Health continues the heritage of the Sisters of Mercy by providing holistic, compassionate care for those in need, and has served Victorians for over 150 years.

This inaugural report highlights some of the research projects and initiatives being undertaken at our various public health facilities. It also demonstrates the commitment of our talented staff who must be commended for their desire to improve the care and health outcomes of their patients and the greater community.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to this report, especially Associate Professor David Allen. I would also like to acknowledge all Mercy Health staff. Without the unique contribution of each person, we would not be able to achieve that which is outlined in this report or continue to care first.

## Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Melbourne



Professor Michael Permezel

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology located at the Mercy Hospital for Women under the leadership of Professor Michael Permezel, had what can only be described as another exceptional research year in 2008.

Associate Professor Sue Walker is lauded for her clinical skills in heading the Perinatal Medicine Unit, her teaching prowess (always the most popular teacher in the department and among the best in the medical course) and her general leadership throughout the hospital. Her research productivity is also outstanding, but perhaps less well known. She is first author in several landmark publications, in high citation journals and has received an award for the best research presentation at an ultrasound conference in Canada.

The contribution of Professor Greg Rice to the department has been immense. He began supporting the department more than a decade ago with his expertise in perinatal laboratory research and his strategic planning of the scientific endeavours. Although now based at the Baker Research Institute, his ongoing support and collaboration is highly valued.

Dr Martha Lappas began in the department as a PhD student. Her outstanding success was acknowledged in 2007 when she became the RD Wright NHMRC Fellow – a highly prestigious five year award. She has gathered a superb team of young scientists around her including two research assistants (Amber Mitton and Ratana Lim) and three outstanding PhD students (Sarah Holdsworth-Carson, Michelle Colomiere and Mahalia Chai).

Dr Harry Georgiou has been with the department for over 10 years. Not only has he grafted significant research success of his own, as outlined below, but his managerial role in caring for the laboratory, research equipment, information technology and environmental health and safety has been instrumental in underpinning the success of the department. His work with Megan di Quinzio has provided an excellent example of scientist-clinician research collaboration. They have been fortunate to have a very able PhD student in Jan Heng.



The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology has benefited from the contribution of many outstanding research midwives: former research midwives, including Lyn Tuttle, Angie Denning and Val Bryant (Ratten), and currently Gay Fleming, Anne Beaston, Renee Grant, Astrid Tiefholz and Mardi Reeves.

Ongoing support from the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Health, the Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies, Diabetes Australia and others have enabled the research to continue, culminating in the National Health and Medical Research Council successes of recent years.



*Left to right:* Research midwives Astrid Tiefholz, Gay Fleming, Renee Grant, Mardi Reeves, Anne Beaston

## Dr Martha Lappas, Perinatal Research Group

*Martha Lappas BSc Hons, PhD; Amber Mitton BSc Hons; Michelle Colomiere BSc Hons; Sarah Holdsworth-Carson BSc Hons; Ratana Lim BSc Hons; Mahalia Chai BSc Hons; Michael Permezal MD FRANZCOG; Greg Rice BSc Hons, PhD*



*Top row, left to right:* Amber Mitton, Michelle Colomiere, Sarah Holdsworth-Carson, Dr Martha Lappas (RD Wright NHMRC Fellow)

*Bottom row, left to right:* Ratana Lim, Mahalia Chai

### **Mechanisms regulating the onset of human labour and parturition**

Reproductive biologists still cannot explain the molecular mechanisms that govern human birth. This lack of knowledge prevents the development of better monitoring and treatment of complications of labour and delivery. If we are to provide the best possible start to life and improve newborn health care delivery then we must: (1) better understand what triggers labour; (2) determine whether there are biomarkers that we can use to identify women at risk of early birth; and (3) identify new ways to delay birth. This is the overall objective of this research project. In particular, this project focuses on how the multiple events needed to achieve a successful outcome to pregnancy are co-ordinated at the time of birth.

### **The physiology of foetal membrane rupture**

Preterm birth, with its attendant morbidity and mortality, remains among the most significant health care issues in the developed world, affecting more than 17,000 Australian women and their babies each year. Preterm birth accounts for 85% of all early infant deaths and is associated with greatly increased rates of long term disabilities, including cerebral palsy, intellectual handicap, neurocognitive disorders and other sensorineural dysfunction. For the survivors of preterm birth, the substantial medical and social consequences extend beyond childhood. However, despite the enormity of this problem and advances in healthcare in other fields, the rate of preterm birth has remained largely unchanged.

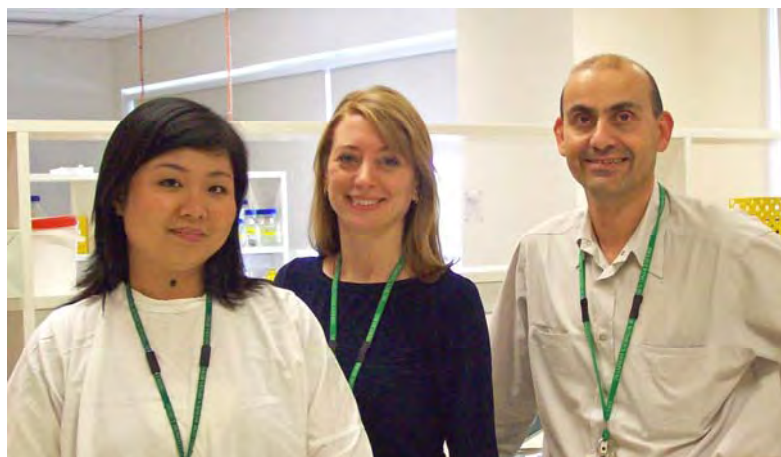
As preterm rupture of foetal membranes is a major antecedent for preterm delivery, a clinical problem resulting in significant perinatal mortality and long term morbidity, it is of interest both physiologically and clinically. If we are to develop clinically useful interventions and improve neonatal outcome, a better understanding of the physiological mechanisms involved in membrane rupture is essential. The aim of this project is to gain a better understanding of the physiological mechanisms involved in foetal membrane rupture with a view to future development of clinically useful interventions to reduce this potentially devastating complication of pregnancy.

### **Molecular mechanisms underlying gestational diabetes mellitus**

Although major advances have been made in our understanding of the molecular mechanisms of insulin action and identification of the defects leading to insulin resistance in Type 2 diabetes, there is still a paucity of data available concerning gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). A better understanding of the regulatory pathways that mediate insulin action may lead to the identification of molecular targets for therapy. The overall aim of this project is to increase our understanding of the causes of gestational diabetes. In particular, the role of various inflammatory pathways in the biochemical mechanisms involved in insulin resistance associated with GDM will be examined, with these pathways representing novel approaches to developing agents for efficacious clinical management strategies for the management of GDM.

## Dr Harry Georgiou, Perinatal Research Group

*Harry Georgiou BSc (Hons), PhD; Megan Di Quinzio MD FRANZCOG; Jan Heng BBiomedSc (Hons); Amy Bohren BA Hons; Greg Rice PhD; Michael Permezel MD FRANZCOG*



*Left to right: Jan Heng, Megan di Quinzio, Harry Georgiou*

### **Biochemical markers for the prediction of preterm birth**

Preterm birth (<37 weeks' gestation) is the most significant problem facing contemporary clinical obstetrics. It occurs in approximately 8-13% of all deliveries. Being born too early is the major cause of perinatal morbidity and mortality and accounts for the majority of infant deaths. Recent advances in perinatology and neonatology have increased survival rates, particularly for the extremely premature baby, but the associated morbidity for these survivors remains significant where up to one quarter will have at least one major disability. Healthcare costs for the short and long term care of these infants is enormous.

Our lack of understanding of the aetiology of preterm birth limits our ability to identify and implement efficacious management and intervention strategies to minimise the adverse effects on the baby. The lack of a rapid and reliable screening test to identify asymptomatic women who are at risk of developing preterm labour further limits the early detection of disease onset and the implementation of preventive therapies. An early detection test with a high positive predictive value and high sensitivity would represent a major advance to the discipline and afford the opportunity to evaluate alternative treatment and clinical management strategies.

The aims of this project are threefold: (1) to identify and characterise protein biomarkers found in human cervico-vaginal fluid (CVF) that are associated with impending preterm labour and preterm prelabour rupture of membranes; (2) to validate these labour associated biomarkers in a large clinical cohort; and (3) to develop and evaluate the clinical utility of a multiple biomarker screening test for the prediction of preterm labour.

Screening for specific proteins is now underway in three clinical cohorts: healthy pregnant women at term, women with known risk factors for preterm labour and women with threatened preterm labour. For example, we have shown that the expression of an anti-inflammatory protein (interleukin-1 receptor antagonist) significantly decreases in CVF before the onset of spontaneous labour. This protein is further diminished if spontaneous rupture of the foetal membranes precedes labour (Heng et al, 2008). Validating the expression of these crucial proteins will provide insight into their temporal changes before the onset of labour, giving us a better understanding of the triggers and processes involved in human parturition.

The development of multivariate classification models represents a promising approach to improving diagnostic efficacy and clinical utility. We envisage that a multiple biomarker screening test may provide improved sensitivity and positive predictive value than the current foetal fibronectin test for preterm labour. The triage of at-risk women into a high surveillance model of care will not only minimise the risk of preterm labour but will allow novel and targeted preventive treatments to be evaluated.

### **Gestational Diabetes Follow-Up Project**

*Amy Bohren BA; Harry Georgiou BSc (Hons), PhD; Anna Lee DDU MRANZCOG; Richard Hiscock FRANZCA; Sue Walker MD, CFMM, DDU, FRANZCOG; Michael Permezel MD, MRCP, FRANZCOG*



Amy Bohren

The Gestational Diabetes Follow-Up Project was established in 2003 as an adjunct to the well-known Gestational Diabetes Follow-Up Program, which is Australia's longest running clinical service and epidemiological study into the development of Type 2 diabetes among women with a history of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). The program acknowledges the previous efforts of Emeritus Professor Normal Beischer, Dr Peter Wein and Ms Mary Sheedy in making outstanding contributions to our knowledge of gestational diabetes and its later consequences. Our research has demonstrated that women who experience diabetes during pregnancy are almost 10 times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes later in life, with over one quarter of participants developing the condition within 15 years of the index pregnancy (Lee et al, 2007).

Since the 1970s, women who had experienced GDM during pregnancy have been returning to Mercy Hospital for Women for glucose tolerance testing every 12-24 months and, at the same time, providing important clinical data for research purposes. At each appointment, women are provided with information about how to maintain a healthy lifestyle in order to reduce their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes; results are communicated to general practitioners for interim care. The Gestational Diabetes Follow-Up Project led by Dr Harry Georgiou adds a scientific dimension to the research by collecting blood samples which will be used in protein analysis. Previous studies have shown that certain proteins in the blood are altered during pregnancy and this precedes the development of GDM (Georgiou et al, 2008). The current project aims to determine which blood proteins are involved in the development of Type 2 diabetes in order to establish an early detection method. Early detection would allow the commencement of interventions that would help delay or prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes and its complications.

## Associate Professor Sue Walker, Perinatal Medicine Unit and Mercy Hospital for Women Registrars

*Sue Walker MD, DDU, CMFM, FRANZCOG; Alexis Shub MB, BS, PhD, DDU, CMFM, FRANZCOG; Elizabeth McCarthy MD, DDU, CMFM, FRANZCOG; Alison Fung MB, BS, MRANZCOG; Michael Permezel MD, MRCP, FRANZCOG*



Sue Walker

These very busy clinicians from the Perinatal Medicine Unit still find time to undertake important clinical research. It must be mentioned here that Alexis Shub and Elizabeth McCarthy obtained their Certificate of Maternal Foetal Medicine (MFM) in 2008, giving them the college qualification for the work they have been doing so ably for many years. We expect Alison Fung to join them in 2010 as an MFM subspecialist.

### **Epilepsy and pregnancy**

The Austin Hospital, and in particular Professor Sam Berkovic, is an international leader in research and clinical management of epilepsy. Collaboration between Associate Professor Sue Walker and Professor Berkovic has resulted in a review paper accepted for publication this year and further clinical research is now planned into the knowledge of women in childbearing years of the implications of epilepsy and reproductive health and pregnancy care.

### **Weight gain in pregnancy**

Kirby Jefferies, Advanced Medical Science student, supervised by Alexis Shub, completed this very clinically useful project in 2008. They investigated the impact of women recording their weight at each antenatal visit during pregnancy on total weight gain. Not surprisingly, merely recording notice of weight gain was an effective intervention in the prevention of excessive weight gain and obesity. The potential impact on population health is immense. Larger studies, essentially duplicating this research, are underway.

### **Clinicians' and women's perception of acceptable foetal risk associated with vaginal birth**

This study has examined pregnant women's (and their caregivers') perception of the foetal risk associated with vaginal birth and what level of foetal risk they would consider acceptable to avoid caesarean section and deliver vaginally. The data revealed that there was a wide variation in "acceptable risk thresholds", but that the average level of "acceptable foetal risk" to avoid death or serious injury was 1:1,000. This unique data finally gives us some idea of what women believe is an "acceptable foetal risk threshold" when faced with a potentially complicated vaginal birth. This data was published in 2007, but has been the basis of an invitation to speak at the Federation of International Gynaecologists and Obstetricians in South Africa in 2009.

### **Inherited thrombophilias**

Inherited thrombophilias are associated with an increase in thromboembolic risk, and the uteroplacental bed is particularly vulnerable by virtue of the hypercoagulable state of pregnancy. Numerous studies have linked the presence of inherited thrombophilia with adverse pregnancy outcome, and this large prospective study has determined the frequency of inherited thrombophilia in an Australian low-risk antenatal population to determine whether there is excessive risk of adverse outcome.

### **Amniotic fluid LBC as a marker of foetal lung maturity**

There is a wealth of literature confirming the increased risk of term respiratory morbidity associated with elective caesarean birth, but whether this can be predicted and prevented remains unknown. Lamellar bodies are the "packages" of surfactant, responsible for pulmonary maturation, excreted from the lungs into the amniotic fluid. In this study, an analysis of the lamellar body count in amniotic fluid at term elective caesarean section was performed to see if we could identify those neonates at high risk of severe respiratory morbidity. The study found that a significant association between amniotic fluid lamellar body counts and infants admitted to the nursery requiring supplemental oxygen or assisted ventilation. Further work in this area may enable us to identify those infants most at risk of respiratory morbidity so that delivery may be deferred (where safely able to do so) or to optimise postnatal management to reduce the risk of serious morbidity. Yvonne Chow, Advanced Medical Science student, worked very effectively with Sue Walker in a short period of time to achieve outstanding results.

### **Maternal and paternal height as a determinant of foetal long bone length in the mid and third trimester**

This study was undertaken with the assistance of another very capable Advanced Medical Science student, Alison Wilde. It examined the relative impact of maternal and paternal height on foetal long bone lengths in the mid-trimester. This is important information when counselling families regarding the potential foetal abnormalities (such as Down syndrome or skeletal dysplasias) associated with reduced long bone length. This study has been the useful basis for an ongoing collaborative project between the Department of Endocrinology at the Austin Hospital and Perinatal Medicine Unit at Mercy Hospital for Women, where mid-trimester 2D and 3D long bone measurements are being used as a determinant of longer term bone health.

### **Serum markers of amniotic fluid embolism**

Amniotic fluid embolism remains one of the leading causes of maternal death. It is a catastrophic event, usually occurring in labour of otherwise well women, resulting in a high maternal and perinatal mortality. In this project, a candidate and discovery based approach was used to try and identify unique amniotic fluid proteins that could be recovered from maternal serum, and thus provide a diagnostic, as there are none currently available. The proteomic analysis has yielded some encouraging results and a candidate based approach is continuing to identify markers which may ultimately have clinical utility. If such a marker can be found then prediction of this devastating complication may become a clinical reality, which may then provide an avenue for prevention. Suat Ng laid the groundwork for this project during her Advanced Medical Science year in 2006, again working in tandem with Sue Walker.

### **Obstructive sleep apnoea**

Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) is becoming more prevalent with increasing obesity, including the antenatal population. This project will be conducted by Alison Fung and will comprise sleep studies along with electronic foetal monitoring among women at high risk of sleep apnoea based on questionnaire and neck thickness. We hope to determine whether periods of apnoea/hypopnoea are associated with foetal heart rate decelerations, and whether treatment of OSA in pregnancy may therefore reduce the risk of adverse perinatal outcome.

During 2008 one of the Mercy Hospital for Women registrars, Lenore Ellett, received the RANZCOG prize for the best research presentation by a trainee at the College Registrar's "Registrar Research Day". Her research investigated sleep disturbance in pregnancy in collaboration with the Austin Sleep Laboratory. Alison Fung will continue this very productive collaboration in 2009. Outstanding research presentations at the "Registrar Research Day" were also made by Anna Lee, Kate Stone, Kent Kuswanto and Chris Russell. Much credit for this research goes to the hardworking registrars but also to Sue Walker, Alexis Shub, Paddy Moore and others for providing support.

Associate Professor Sue Walker is also collaborating with midwives in other research projects mentioned elsewhere in this report, including "A quantitative and qualitative analysis of women's perception of antenatal transfer from regional Victoria" (with Sarah Mitchell and Susan McDonald) and the "Diabetes and antenatal milk expressing (DAME) project" (with Della Forster and Lisa Amir).

### **Associate Professor Sonia Grover and Advanced Medical Science Students**



Sonia Grover

### **Bleeding disorders in menorrhagia and endometriosis**

Associate Professor Sonia Grover is supervising two Advanced Medical Science students, Emma Johnson and Sarah Heynemann, in the University Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The research is in collaboration with the Department of Haematology at the Austin Hospital and is exploring a possible role of bleeding disorders in the pathogenesis of these conditions. Bleeding disorders are reported to occur in 1% of the general population and in 10-30% of women who are seen in gynaecology outpatient clinics with heavy menstrual bleeding. Emma is exploring this question in the context of women presenting to Mercy Hospital for Women with a history of heavy menstrual bleeding, as well as clarifying the value of a standardised bleeding questionnaire.

These questions have never been posed in the setting of Australian women. Heavy and prolonged bleeding has repeatedly been shown to be a risk factor for endometriosis. As these symptoms are features of women with bleeding disorders, Sarah is exploring the question as to how many with proven endometriosis actually have evidence of a bleeding disorder. This issue has not been explored before and has the potential to be important in our understanding of the development of endometriosis.

### **Papers published**

Georgiou HM, Lappas M, Georgiou GM, Marita A, Bryant VJ, Hiscock R, Permezel M, Khalil Z, Rice GE

Screening for biomarkers predictive of gestational diabetes mellitus. *ACTA Diabetologica*. 45 (3):157-165, 2008.

Lappas M, Odumetse TL, Riley C, Reti NG, Holdsworth-Carson SJ, Rice GE, Permezel M  
Prelabour foetal membranes overlying the cervix display alterations in inflammation and NF-KappaB signalling pathways. *Placenta*. 29 (12):995-1002, 2008.

Lappas M, Rice GE

Transcriptional regulation of the processes of human labour and delivery. *Trophoblast Research*. [Accepted October 2008]

Holdsworth-Carson S, Permezel M, Riley C, Rice GE, Lappas M

Peroxisome proliferator-activated receptors and retinoid X receptor-alpha in term human gestational tissues: Tissue specific and labour associated changes. *Placenta*. [Accepted November 2008]

Lappas M, Lim R, Riley C, Rice GE, Permezel M

Localisation and expression of FoxO1 proteins in human gestational tissues. *Placenta*. [Accepted December 2008]

Di Quinzio MKW, Georgiou HM, Holdsworth-Carson SJ, Ayhan M, Heng YJJ, Walker SP, Rice GE, Permezel M

Proteomic analysis of human cervico-vaginal fluid displays differential protein expression in association with labour onset at term. *J Proteome. Res* 7:1916-1921, 2008.

Heng YJ, Di Quinzio MKW, Permezel M, Rice GE, Georgiou HM

Interleukin-1 receptor antagonist in human cervico-vaginal fluid in term pregnancy and labour. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*. 199:656.e1-656.e7, 2008.

Tong S, Kaur A, Walker SP, Bryant V, Onwude JL, Permezel M

Miscarriage risk for asymptomatic women after a normal first-trimester prenatal visit. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2008; Mar;111(3):710-4.

Said JM, Brennecke SP, Moses EK, Walker SP, Monagle PT, Campbell J, Bryant VJ, Borg AJ, Higgins JR

The prevalence of inherited thrombophilic polymorphisms in an asymptomatic Australian antenatal population. *Aust N Z J Obstet Gynaecol*. 2008 Dec; 48(6):536-41.



## Conference presentations

- Topic: Targeting tumour associated EGFR with monoclonal antibody 806 activates NF-KappaB and initiates tumour vascular normalisation (Abstracts)  
 Presenter/s: Gan H, Lappas M, Scott A, Johns T  
 Conference: 99th AACR Meeting  
 Location: San Diego, CA, USA  
 Date: 12-16 April 2008
- Topic: Novel method for detection of activated transcription factors in human gestational tissues  
 Presenter/s: Lappas M, Oliva K, Barker G, Rice GE  
 Conference: HUPO 7th Annual World Congress  
 Location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 Date: 16-20 August 2008
- Topic: The effect of labour status on human gestational tissue mRNA and protein expression of PPAR isoforms (Oral presentation)  
 Presenter/s: Holdsworth-Carson SJ, Permezel M, Rice GE, Lappas M  
 Conference: ESA-SRB Annual Scientific Meeting  
 Location: Melbourne, Australia  
 Date: 25-28 August 2008
- Topic: Defective insulin signalling in placenta, adipose tissue and skeletal muscle collected from pregnancies complicated by gestational diabetes mellitus  
 Presenter/s: Colomiere M, Permezel M, Lappas M  
 Conference: ADS-ADEA Annual Scientific Meeting  
 Location: Melbourne, Australia  
 Date: 27-29 August 2008
- Topic: Resveratrol, an activator of FoxO, inhibits LPS-induced cytokine and prostaglandin release from human gestational tissues  
 Presenter/s: Lappas M, Mitton A, Riley C, Rice GE, Permezel M  
 Conference: ESA-SRB Annual Scientific Meeting  
 Location: Melbourne, Australia  
 Date: 25-28 August 2008
- Topic: Effect of free fatty acids on the expression of inflammatory and insulin signalling pathways on human skeletal muscle obtained from pregnant women  
 Presenter/s: Lappas M, Permezel M  
 Conference: ADS-ADEA Annual Scientific Meeting  
 Location: Melbourne, Australia  
 Date: 27-29 August 2008
- Topic: Inhibition of NF-kappaB reverses oxidant-induced defects in insulin signalling in human skeletal muscle and adipose tissues obtained from pregnant women  
 Presenter/s: Lappas M, Permezel M  
 Conference: ADS-ADEA Annual Scientific Meeting  
 Location: Melbourne, Australia  
 Date: 27-29 August 2008

- Topic: The expression of transcription factors is increased in supracervical foetal membranes  
 Presenter/s: Lappas M, Riley C, Permezel M, Rice GE  
 Conference: The 14th IFPA Conference-12th EPG Conference  
 Location: Seggau Castle, Austria  
 Date: 10-13 September 2008
- Topic: Tissue specific labour-associated changes in PPAR mRNA expression in term human gestational tissues  
 Presenter/s: Holdsworth-Carson SJ, Permezel M, Rice GE, Lappas M  
 Conference: The 14th IFPA Conference-12th EPG Conference  
 Location: Seggau Castle, Austria  
 Date: 10-13 September 2008
- Topic: Free fatty acids cause alterations in the insulin signalling pathway in JEG-3 cells  
 Presenter/s: Lappas M, Mitton A, Permezel M  
 Conference: 44th Annual Meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD)  
 Location: Rome, Italy  
 Date: 7-11 September 2008
- Topic: Identifying novel biomarkers of impending human labour  
 Presenter/s: Heng YJ, Di Quinzio MKW, Permezel M, Rice GE, Georgiou HM  
 Conference: 39th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Society for Reproductive Biology  
 Location: Melbourne, Australia  
 Date: August 2008
- Topic: Decreasing Cu,Zn superoxide dismutase in human cervicovaginal fluid with impending labour  
 Presenter/s: Heng YJ, Di Quinzio MKW, Permezel M, Fleming G, Reeves M, Rice GE, Georgiou HM  
 Conference: 4th Australian Health and Medical Research Congress  
 Location: Brisbane, Australia  
 Date: November 2008
- Topic: Altered maternal serum cytokine profiles across very early pregnancy in association with low birthweight  
 Presenter/s: Tong S, Succintri Thio Y, Bryant V, Permezel M, Russell C, Georgiou HM  
 Conference: 56th Annual Meeting of the Society for Gynaecologic Investigation  
 Location: Glasgow, Scotland  
 Date: March 2009
- Topic: Decreasing Cu,Zn superoxide dismutase in human cervicovaginal fluid with impending term labour  
 Presenter/s: Heng YJ, Di Quinzio MKW, Permezel M, Rice GE, Georgiou HM  
 Conference: 56th Annual Meeting of the Society for Gynaecologic Investigation  
 Location: Glasgow, Scotland  
 Date: March 2009
- Topic: Multiple novel predictors of human labour  
 Presenter/s: Heng YJ, Di Quinzio MKW, Permezel M, Rice GE, Georgiou HM  
 Conference: 56th Annual Meeting of the Society for Gynaecologic Investigation  
 Location: Glasgow, Scotland  
 Date: March 2009

## Research grants

Year: 2008  
 Sponsor: ANZ – Medical and Technology Grants  
 Project Title: Unique insights into the causes of preterm labour – understanding foetal membrane rupture  
 Chief Investigator/s: Martha Lappas  
 Funding Amount: \$15,000

Year: 2008  
 Sponsor: Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies  
 Project Title: 1st trimester ghrelin and its relationship to low birthweight  
 Chief Investigator/s: Martha Lappas, Stephen Tong, Michael Permezel  
 Funding Amount: \$30,000

Year: 2008  
 Sponsor: Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies  
 Project Title: Molecular mechanisms that regulate the onset of gestational diabetes mellitus  
 Chief Investigator/s: Martha Lappas, Michelle Colomiere, Michael Permezel  
 Funding Amount: \$20,000

Year: 2008  
 Sponsor: Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies  
 Project Title: Is the antioxidant status altered in placenta, adipose tissues and skeletal muscle from women with gestational diabetes mellitus?  
 Chief Investigator/s: Martha Lappas, Michael Permezel  
 Funding Amount: \$15,000

Year: 2007-11  
 Sponsor: NHMRC RD Wright Career Development Award  
 Project Title: Understanding the mechanisms that regulate the onset of human labour and delivery  
 Funding Amount: \$445,000

Year: 2007-09  
 Sponsor: NHMRC Project Grant  
 Project Title: The insulin signalling pathway in normal and gestationally diabetic pregnancies  
 Chief Investigator/s: Martha Lappas, Gernot Desoye, Michael Permezel  
 Funding Amount: \$306,938

Year: 2006-08  
 Sponsor: NHMRC Project Grant  
 Project Title: What triggers birth? New opportunities for prevention of early delivery  
 Chief Investigator/s: Greg Rice, Martha Lappas, Douglas Kniss, Gert Talbo, Ian Young  
 Funding Amount: \$517,500

Year: 2008-10  
 Sponsor: NHMRC Project Grant  
 Project Title: Investigating the link between early pregnancy and obstetric diseases  
 Chief Investigator/s: Rice GE, Tong S, Georgiou HM  
 Funding Amount: \$461,625

Year: 2008  
Sponsor: Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies  
Project Title: Characterising differential protein expression associated with term pregnancy and labour in human cervico-vaginal fluid  
Chief Investigator/s: Heng J, Georgiou HM, DiQuinzio M  
Funding Amount: \$20,000

Year: 2008  
Sponsor: Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies  
Chief Investigator/s: Georgiou HM, Rice G, Permezel M  
Title: Early screening for pregnancy complications  
Funding Amount: \$10,000

Year: 2007-08  
Sponsor: National Health & Medical Research Council  
Project Title: Development of a multiplex assay for the identification of women at risk of preterm labour  
Chief Investigator/s: Georgiou HM, Di Quinzio MKW, Young IR, Rice GE  
Funding Amount: \$198,375

## Midwifery Professorial Unit, Mercy Hospital for Women, La Trobe University

The Midwifery Professorial Unit and the Professional Development & Research team aim to facilitate and support the education and professional development of nurses and midwives, encouraging a commitment to lifelong learning and fostering the development of evidence based practice and research within an environment of consumer-focused care.

### Objectives:

- To facilitate the education and professional development of nurses and midwives
- To encourage nurses and midwives to partake in research activities/projects and to initiate/lead their own research projects
- To establish an organisational framework for the development, implementation and evaluation of educational and professional development activities
- To develop and maintain high quality, clinically relevant programs that support clinical practice development
- To engage in higher degree studies that focus on relevant areas of clinical practice and development
- To ensure that all programs adhere to the principles of adult learning and are research based
- To foster understanding between the various areas of nursing/midwifery education practice
- To provide accessible and flexible learning opportunities
- To be proactive in the development of new programs within the multidisciplinary team that support consumer, organisational and professional development needs
- To foster and maintain relevant internal and external links with allied health, medical and professional organisations



*Left to right:* Tara Cantillon, Maternity Services Educator; Jennifer Fielding, Clinical Support Midwife Birthing Suites; Professor Susan McDonald, Professor of Midwifery, La Trobe University/Mercy Hospital for Women; Kym Harrison, Clinical Allocations Co-ordinator/Clinical Support Midwife; Jackie Keane, Manager Professional Development & Research Unit (Nursing and Midwifery)

## Research projects

- Victorian Midwifery Refresher Project
- HIV/HepC Counselling Course for Midwives
- Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Midwifery Division 2 Project
- A workforce impact evaluation of models of education preparation for entry to practice as a midwife in Victoria

## Publications and presentations

McDonald SJ, Henderson JJ, Faulkner S, Evans S, Hagan R (2008)  
Effect of an extended midwifery postnatal support program on the duration of breast feeding: A randomised controlled trial. *Midwifery*. [Article in press]

McDonald SJ, Middleton P (2008)  
Effect of umbilical cord clamping of term infants on maternal and neonatal outcomes. *Cochrane Review*. The Cochrane Collaboration 2008. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Begley CM, Devane D, Murphy DJ, Gyte GML, McDonald SJ, McGuire B (protocol)(2008)  
Active versus expectant management for women in third stage of labour. *Cochrane Review*. The Cochrane Collaboration 2008. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Lam C, McDonald SJ (2008)  
Comparison of two pushing techniques used in the second stage of labour for their effect on maternal perception of fatigue in the early postpartum period among Chinese women: A randomised controlled trial. Paper presented at ICM 28th Triennial Congress, Glasgow.

Eeles S, McDonald SJ, Sheehan P (2008)  
Folic acid consumption prior to and during pregnancy: A study of Victorian women who have recently given birth. Paper presented at ICM 28th Triennial Congress, Glasgow.

Newton M, Albers L, Carr C, Foster D, McDonald S, Mazzarino M, Wagstaffe A, Wills G (2008)  
WEBS: Weighing up the evidence in birth suite: Exploring the depth of the evidence practice gap in vaginal examinations and amniotomy in labour. Paper presented at ICM 28th Triennial Congress, Glasgow.

McDonald SJ, Clark E, Lang L (2008)  
Alpine Health Team Midwife Program: The evaluation of a team midwife program in a diverse setting. Paper presented at ICM 28th Triennial Congress, Glasgow.

McDonald S, Middleton P, Andersen C (2008)  
Effect of timing of umbilical cord clamping of term infants on maternal and neonatal outcomes: A Cochrane systematic review. Paper presented at 12th Annual Congress of PSANZ, Gold Coast, Queensland.

## Research funding

Source: Department of Human Services  
 Name: Pre-post HepC/HIV test counselling course for midwives providing low risk antenatal care (Pilot program)

Recipient: Susan McDonald  
 Amount: \$34,787  
 Duration: 12 months

Source: Department of Human Services  
 Name: Refresher pilot program for midwives  
 Recipient: Susan McDonald, Julie Hammett, Jackie Keane  
 Amount: \$118,745  
 Duration: 12 months

## Awards and achievements

Susan McDonald

- Chair, La Trobe University Central Human Ethics Committee, 2006-09
- Member, La Trobe University Research and Graduate Studies Committee, 2008
- Adjunct appointment as Professor, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Curtin University, WA
- Adjunct appointment as Professor, Edith Cowan University, WA
- Elected Member Research Standing Committee, International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)
- DHS Victoria, Member, Obstetric & Maternity Workforce and Education Subcommittee, 2006-08
- Member, BreastMilk Bank Steering Committee, 2008-current
- NHMRC: Member, Expert Advisory Committee, Development of Evidence-Based Antenatal Guidelines, Co-Chair, Clinical Working Group, 2008
- NHMRC Member, Project Grant Review Panel, March-December 2008
- NHMRC Scientific Reviewer of grant applications for project grants
- Nurse Practitioners and Midwifery Practitioners, NSW and Victoria: Member, Accreditation Review Panel
- Nurses Board of Victoria: Midwifery Academic Representative to the Nurses Board of Victoria for Curriculum and Course Accreditation in Midwifery
- Tweddle Child and Family Health Service, Victoria: Member of the Board

Fiona Faulks

- Master of Midwifery Science

Sarah Mitchell

- Master of Midwifery Science

We have a number of Mercy Health staff members currently enrolled in the Master of Midwifery Science degree of whom four will complete degrees in 2009. This is a major achievement for progressing midwifery research and academic enquiry within the organisation.

## Research staff

*Ms Rosetta Moors, Research Assistant; Ms Jackie Free; Lyn Tuttle Scholarship recipient; Ms Cheryl Oliver, Project Manager Victorian Midwifery Refresher Project; Ms Caroline Carr, CMC HIV/HepC Project; Mr Mark Smithers, Web Designer La Trobe University, Vic Midwifery Refresher Project and HIV/HepC Project*

## Professional Development & Research Unit (Nursing and Midwifery)

Jackie Keane is the Manager of the Professional Development & Research Unit. Her responsibilities include providing leadership and direction for nursing/midwifery education and professional career opportunities along with supporting nursing/midwifery research in order to advance the care for mothers, babies and patients.

She has been involved in the pilot project undertaken at Mercy Hospital for Women in 2008 investigating the advantages for Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Midwifery students who are in their fourth academic year as Division 2 Nurses at Mercy Hospital for Women. This project aims to formally evaluate the increased opportunities for learning while being employed as Division 2 nurses within their profession of choice, the financial benefits this presents to students, the avenue for recruitment of our future midwives within the hospital, and assisting with current workforce issues. The study will gather valuable strategic and educational data related to employment patterns, risks and benefits of such a model and health service outcomes.

### Research projects

- Investing in our future: Employment of Bachelor Nursing/Bachelor of Midwifery Double Degree students as Division 2 nurses (Pilot program at Mercy Hospital for Women in conjunction with La Trobe University)
- Changing practice: Postnatal care. Mercy Hospital for Women “Leading the Way”.



## Department of Anaesthesia, Mercy Hospital for Women

Over the past 12 months the Department of Anaesthesia at Mercy Hospital for Women has embarked on an ambitious journey to raise the profile of the specialty of anaesthesia and of the hospital as a leader in women's health. A fundamental element of achieving this goal is to possess a robust culture and track record for high quality research and teaching at many levels. The capacity to attract and retain expert clinicians is significantly supported through engagement of the research fraternity by the gaining of research funding and to exert a presence via publications and other avenues. A strategic plan developed in 2007 specifically identified opportunities to build on the long established reputation of the department as a provider of clinical services by engaging in a raft of research and teaching activities at the local, state, national and international level. Future plans include the creation of an anaesthesia and critical care research secretariat with dedicated research assistants. The key achievements so far are summarised below.

### Grants and research funding

Source: Australian Society of Anaesthetists  
Name: LMA/PacMed Fellowship  
Recipient: Dr Alicia Dennis  
Amount: \$10,000

Source: Educational Grant Edwards Lifesciences  
Recipient: Dr Alicia Dennis  
Amount: \$17,500

Source: SonoSite MicroMaxx Echocardiography machine, long term loan  
Recipient: Dr Alicia Dennis  
Amount: \$65,000

### Publications

Simmons SW, Cyna AM, Dennis AT, Hughes D  
Combined spinal-epidural versus epidural analgesia in labour. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. 2007, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD003401. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD003401.pub2.

Georgiou HM, Lappas M, et al  
Screening for biomarkers predictive of gestational diabetes mellitus. Acta Diabetol. 2008, 45(3): 157-65.

Grubel C, Hiscock R, et al  
Value of spatiotemporal representation of manometric data, Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol, 2008, 6(5): 525-30.

Duley L, Henderson-Smart DJ  
Magnesium sulphate versus diazepam for eclampsia. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. 2003, Issue 4. Art. No.: CD000127. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD000127. Comment by A Dennis 4th edition Cochrane Library 2008.

Schierlitz L, Dwyer PL, Rosamilia A, Murray C, Thomas E, De Souza A, Lim YN and Hiscock R

Tension free vaginal tape is more effective than the trans-obturator tape in women with stress urinary incontinence and intrinsic sphincter deficiency. A prospective randomised study. *Obstetrics & Gynaecology*. [Accepted for publication Sept 2008]

OA SIG Scientific Evidence Project Group 2008

Obstetric anaesthesia: Scientific evidence. Simmons SW (ed), ANZCA [Accessed February 2009] <http://www.anzca.edu.au/fellows/sig/obstetric-anaesthesia-sig/obstetric-anaesthesia-scientific-evidence>

### Posters at national meetings

Poster: General anaesthesia for caesarean section at Mercy Hospital for Women: A five year audit  
Presenter/s: Letson I, Simmons SW  
Event: ANZCA ASM  
Location: Sydney, Australia  
Date: May 2008

### Research projects

Project: A prospective observational study comparing cardiac output assessment by Doppler echocardiography with arterial pressure wave analysis in term pregnant women

Investigator/s: Dennis AT, Arhangelschi I, Simmons SW, Royse C

Project: A prospective observational study of serial cardiac output in term pregnant women on the day of their caesarean birth

Investigator/s: Dennis AT, Arhangelschi I, Simmons SW, Royse C  
(This project is an original research project as part of a PhD undertaken by Alicia Dennis through the Department of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Melbourne.)

Project: General anaesthesia for caesarean section

Investigator/s: Letson I, Simmons SW

Project: Haemostasis registry

Investigator/s: Clarke JV

### Visits by other staff to the department

- Dr Carol Smith, Head of Haematology, Austin Health – Development of a major obstetric haemorrhage protocol
- Dr Veronica Pitt, Cochrane Australasian Centre – Implementation of an integrated system of teaching and training in evidence based medicine for medical staff
- Dr Julian Castro, Cardiologist – Planning and management of women with ischaemic heart disease and acute myocardial infarction in pregnancy
- Associate Professor Colin Royse, ongoing planning and discussion regarding increasing liaison between Mercy Hospital Anaesthetic Department and the University of Melbourne for collaborative research and teaching programs

### **Visits by departmental staff to other institutions**

Dr Scott Simmons visited the UK in April 2008 and visited the Departments of Anaesthesia at St Thomas Hospital and Queen Charlotte's Hospital London to evaluate latest trends in obstetric anaesthesia. There was also the opportunity to attend the scientific meeting "Critical Care in Obstetrics", a joint initiative of the RCOG, BMFMS and OAA.

### **Academic appointments**

The Department of Anaesthesia became affiliated with the Anaesthesia and Pain Management Research Unit, Department of Pharmacology, University of Melbourne and several clinical academic titles were conferred:

- Dr Scott Simmons, Clinical Associate Professor
- Dr Alicia Dennis, Clinical Lecturer
- Dr Ioana Arhanghelschi, Clinical Lecturer

### **Highlights**

Dr Alicia Dennis was appointed Deputy Head in 2007 and commenced work on her PhD shortly afterwards. These studies constitute groundbreaking work in the application of transthoracic echocardiography in pregnancy. This has already been acknowledged by the conferring of several awards and research grants during 2008. The preliminary work currently being done will ultimately lead to a multitude of other projects to improve the care of pregnant women in a wide range of circumstances by direct visualisation of the heart via a safe, simple and inexpensive method. The relevance of the work was highlighted in a recent bulletin of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists which focused on the outstanding work being done by Australasian anaesthetists to improve maternity care, a major initiative of the federal government. Training workshops are planned for national meetings this year based on this work.

The longstanding contribution of Dr Scott Simmons to the field of obstetric anaesthesia was acknowledged through the position of Australasian Visitor to the Combined Annual Scientific Meetings of the Australian and New Zealand Societies of Anaesthesia held in Wellington, New Zealand, October 2008.

A joint quality improvement project was established between Mercy Hospital for Women and the Women's and Children's Hospital South Australia for the development of a categorisation system for emergency caesarean section. This work has been presented to the Victorian Maternity and Newborn Clinical Network which is developing a proposal for implementation in Victoria during 2009.

## Profiles



Associate Professor Scott Simmons

Dr Scott Simmons BSc, BMBS, FANZCA, MBA, is currently Head of Anaesthesia, Department of Anaesthesia, Mercy Hospital for Women, Melbourne and Clinical Associate Professor, Anaesthesia and Pain Management Research Unit, University of Melbourne. Previously Director of Anaesthesia and Executive Director Clinical Governance at the Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide, his major area of clinical practice and research is in obstetric anaesthesia and analgesia. Published and presented on obstetric spinal anaesthesia, prevention of hypotension at caesarean section, postdural puncture headache, and comparisons of CSE with both epidurals for labour analgesia and also with spinals for caesarean section.

Currently a reviewer for the Cochrane Collaboration, Scott chaired the Obstetric Anaesthesia Special Interest Group from 2004-07. After completing studies with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Boston, he has undertaken several projects at the state and national level aimed at quality improvement through system redesign, as well as development of clinical indicators and clinical practice guidelines for obstetric anaesthesia.



Dr Alicia Dennis

Dr Alicia Dennis obtained her medical degree from the University of Melbourne in 1994 and completed her anaesthetic training at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne in 2002. She subspecialised in obstetric anaesthesia and is the Deputy Head of Anaesthesia at Mercy Hospital for Women. She is a Cochrane Reviewer, has a Graduate Diploma in Perioperative and Critical Care Echocardiography and is undertaking a PhD investigating the cardiovascular system in women with pre-eclampsia.

She is an executive member of the Obstetric Anaesthesia Special Interest Group of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and Australian Society of Anaesthetists. Her additional interests include the management of high risk obstetric women, multiprofessional team training and education in obstetrics anaesthesia and critical care, indigenous maternal health, and maternal morbidity and mortality.

The research studies of Alicia towards her PhD with the University of Melbourne is groundbreaking work in the application of transthoracic echocardiography in pregnancy.

### **Awards and achievements**

- Dr Alicia Dennis: Gilbert Troup Prize Australian Society of Anaesthetists
- Dr Alicia Dennis: Australian Society of Anaesthetists LMA/PacMed Fellowship
- Clinical Associate Professor Scott Simmons: Australasian Visitor, ASA/NZSA Combined ASM, Wellington, New Zealand

## Mercy Mental Health



Mr Mario Blandin de Chalain, Manager Mercy Mental Health Program

The Mercy Mental Health Program is a psychiatric hospital and community service that provides a range of mental health services to adults in western Melbourne, predominately in Wyndham, Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong. Some specialist services to mothers throughout western Victoria are also provided.

Mercy Mental Health provides high quality care and treatment of mental illness, with services delivered via specialist teams. The program is operated by Werribee Mercy Hospital and pays particular attention to the differing cultural groups within our community.

Mercy Mental Health has an ongoing commitment to research that is focused on improving treatment management of clients.

### Academic & Research Unit



*Left to right:* Ms Dawn Harvey, Manager of Academic & Research Unit; Dr Anita Govindan, Acting Head of Academic & Research Unit; Kelly Gray, Research Assistant Academic & Research Unit

The Academic & Research Unit (ARU) is based at the Wyndham site and has been a part of Mercy Mental Health since 2003. The ARU was headed by Dr Sean Jespersen, an academic psychiatrist, up until March 2008. Since then, Dr Anita Govindan, Senior Clinical Psychologist, has been acting Head of the ARU. Ms Dawn Harvey is the current Manager of the ARU and has played an integral role in research projects within Mercy Mental Health. Ms Kelly Gray has been the research assistant since 2004.

For a number of years the focus of the ARU was primarily pharmaceutical company sponsored clinical trials. However, early 2008 marked a shift in focus towards psychosocial research. A number of clinicians have developed and conducted their own research projects over the years, many resulting in publications for the staff involved.

The main functions of the ARU are to review all research proposals that involve Mercy Mental Health (prior to review by the Mercy Health Human Research Ethics Committee), monitor the progress of all research projects being conducted within Mercy Mental Health, assist and support clinicians in the development of research ideas and proposals, promote research across the service, and develop and conduct its own research.

### Academic and research achievements

During 2008, a number of projects were being conducted within Mercy Mental Health involving Mercy Health staff (underlined) or researchers from other institutions. Many of these projects have continued into 2009.

### Research projects

Project:	A case control study to identify risk factors for myocarditis with clozapine
Investigator/s:	McNeil J, Ronaldson K, Taylor A, Jespersen S, <u>Stevenson D</u>
Project:	Mother baby unit: Former patient follow-up study
Investigator/s:	<u>Janson H</u> , <u>Bajkai J</u> , <u>Williamson J</u>
Project:	Suicide prevention in the Emergency Department (SPED): Management of deliberate self-harm through an assertive engagement, brief psychotherapy and community linkage model
Investigator/s:	Joubert L, Harvey C, Jespersen S, Cementon E, Hawthorne G, Kelly AM, <u>Govindan A</u> , Hill N
Project:	A randomised controlled trial of CONSTA compare to CONSTA and collaborative therapy in a naturalistic setting
Investigator/s:	Gilbert M, Castle D, Chamberlain J, Pawsey B, Holdsworth C, <u>Carroll G</u>
Project:	Antioxidants in bipolar disorder: A double-blind placebo-controlled trial of n-acetyl cysteine
Investigator/s:	Berk M, <u>Stevenson D</u> , Copolov D, Bush A, Schapkaitz I
Project:	Relapse of bipolar affective disorder in the perinatal period: Role of sleep and circadian rhythms
Investigator/s:	Buist A, Bilszta J, <u>Szego K</u> , <u>Galbally M</u>
Project:	Acceptance and commitment therapy for medication resistant psychosis: A randomised controlled trial
Investigator/s:	Farhall J, Castle D, Copolov D, Hayes S, Shawyer F, Thomas N
Project:	The vulnerability to psychosis: Developmental pathways to auditory hallucinations and delusions
Investigator/s:	Farhall J, Goldstone E

## Publications

A number of research projects conducted within Mercy Mental Health resulted in publications in 2008.

Backus L, Weinkove J, Lucas M, Jespersen S

The safety of an aggressive discharge policy in case management of the severely mentally ill. *Australasian Psychiatry*. Vol 16, No. 1, February 2008.

Hodge K, Jespersen S

Side effects and treatment with clozapine: A comparison between the views of patients and their clinicians. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*. Vol 17, February 2008.

Mathai J, Jespersen S, Bourne A, Donegan T, Akinbiyi A, Gray K

Use of the strengths and difficulties questionnaire in screening for psychiatric disorder in children of parents with a mental illness. *Australian E Journal of Mental Health*. Vol 7, Issue 3, 2008.

Berk M, Copolov D, Dean O, Lu K, Jeavons S, Schapkaitz I, Anderson-Hunt M, Judd F, Katz F, Katz P, Ording-Jespersen S, Little J, Conus P, Cuenod M, Do K, Bush A

N-Acetyl Cysteine as a glutathione precursor for schizophrenia: A double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled trial. *Biological Psychiatry*. September 2008 edition.

## Other achievements

Two Mercy Mental Health staff were awarded a Mercy Health Scholarship:

- Ms Judy Foord, Master of Advanced Nursing Practice
- Ms Susan McDonald, Master of Clinical Education
- Dr Anita Govindan completed a Doctor of Psychology (Clinical). Her thesis was entitled "Suicidal intent within an acute Australian self-harming cohort".
- Ms Arhet Geberat, Social Worker/Bi-Lingual Case Manager completed a Master of Educational Leadership (coursework)
- Mr Aroon Naidoo, Social Worker, completed a Diploma in Frontline Management

## Papers sent for review

Jespersen S, Chong T, Donegan T, Gray K, Kudinoff T, McGain L, Gant D

Reflections on our experience of facilitated discharge from a mental health service.

*Australasian Psychiatry*. [Accepted for publication subject to amendments, September 2008]

Jespersen S, Chong T, Gray K, Carrin D, Morton L, Robinson T, Inglis S

Clinical characteristics and patterns of referral to a primary mental health team: A retrospective study. *Primary Care Psychiatry*. [February 2008]

Mathai J, Jespersen S, Bourne A, Donegan T, Akinbiyi A, Gray K

Use of the strengths and difficulties questionnaire in screening for psychiatric disorder in children of parents with a mental illness. *Australian E Journal of Mental Health*. [Submitted for publication at the end of November 2008]

Jespersen S, Chong T, Gray K, Kudinoff T, McGain L, Gant D

Reflections on our experience of facilitated discharge from a mental health service. [Accepted subject to amendments]



## Presentations

Throughout 2008, Ms Thuy Dinh, Psychologist at Mercy Mental Health conducted community development programs to raise awareness, promote mental health and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness within the Vietnamese community. These programs range from organising workshops and training courses for Vietnamese community workers and the Vietnamese community and giving talks on Vietnamese SBS radio. Thuy has also conducted some training for the mainstream community.

Three Mercy Mental Health staff presented at the Western Cluster Conference, Melbourne, 28 November 2008.

Topic: Work experience in clinical mental health  
Presenter: Ms Dianne Hawthorne

Topic: It's time! Case management for the 21st century  
Presenter: Ms Teresa Kudinoff

Topic: Not a beacon, but certainly a light coming out of the darkness  
Presenter: Ms Susan McDonald

## Urogynaecology Department, Mercy Hospital for Women



Associate Professor Peter Dwyer

The Urogynaecology Department at Mercy Hospital for Women offers specialised treatment for women with pelvic floor disorders, including urinary incontinence, voiding dysfunction, painful bladder, vaginal prolapse and anorectal symptoms. The department has established a national and international reputation for research and treatment of pelvic floor disorders. Associate Professor Peter Dwyer is Head of the Urogynaecology Department, and Dr Yik Lim and Dr Lore Schierlitz are consultant gynaecologists. The Urogynaecology Department is a multidisciplinary department where nursing staff play a very active role not only in the clinical management of patients but also in research. Our research program would not be possible without the active involvement of our continence nurses, Ms Elizabeth Thomas, Ms Christine Murray and Ms Christine Conway. Miss Christine Turville provides essential secretarial support and management to enable us to continue our clinical and research programs.

The Urogynaecology Research Fellows in the department in 2008 are Dr Joe Lee and Alison De Souza both accredited RANZCOG urogynaecology trainees and Mr Kobi Stav, an Israeli urologist who is spending a two-year fellowship in the department. Dr Lee's research projects include the assessment of urinary function in women with uterovaginal prolapse and sexual function in women with uterovaginal prolapse before and after prolapse surgery. Mr Kobi Stav, who has been evaluating the outcome of women with urodynamic stress incontinence who had midurethral sling procedures performed, has also researched the functional urinary result of surgery for urethral diverticulum. This has already been published in the Journal of Urology. Dr Lore Schierlitz is completing her research project, which is the prospective comparison of the retro pubic midurethral sling (TVT sling) to the transobturator Monarch sling. The results of this trial were published this year in the prestigious Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, although evaluation in this study is ongoing. Dr Schierlitz is also evaluating the results of surgery in women with occult stress incontinence.

During 2008 the Urogynaecology Department at Mercy Hospital for Women, with Alison De Sousa the lead investigator, was awarded a research grant from the Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies for the project "A prospective analysis of sexual function during pregnancy and 12 months postpartum". A research grant from American Medical Systems was received for funding of the study of "Prospective randomised trial comparing the Monarch transobturator midurethral sling to the Mini-arc: No incision midurethral sling for the treatment of women with urodynamic stress incontinence" with Dr Joe Lee the lead investigator.

The Urogynaecology Department held a one day pelvic floor symposium on 31 October, 2008. This included live operating in the morning and a full lecture program with presentations from all members of the department and local and national experts. The symposium was attended by 200 local and interstate gynaecologists and urologists.

Dr Alison De Souza is presently researching in a large prospective study the effect of pregnancy and the type of delivery on sexual function. This is an important study as many women today are electing to have caesarean sections performed for perceived improved benefits to their pelvic floor.

## Presentations

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Topic:       | Demonstrate pelvic reconstructive surgery   |
| Presenter/s: | Dwyer, PL   |
| Lecture:     | Anu Lectureship: Awarded annually with invitation by Professor J Higgins to lecture at the Cork University  |
| Location:    | Women's Hospital, University College Cork, Ireland  |
| Date:        | 2008  |
| Topic:       | Cystourethroscopy: New tool for gynaecologists or a forgotten art?  |
| Presenter/s: | Dwyer PL  |
| Conference:  | Anu Lectureship   |
| Location:    | University College Cork, Ireland  |
| Date:        | 2008  |
| Topic:       | Surgery for posthysterectomy vaginal vault prolapse   |
| Presenter/s: | Dwyer PL  |
| Conference:  | 1st National Pelvic Floor Symposium   |
| Location:    | Cork University Maternity Hospital, Ireland   |
| Date:        | 2008  |
| Topic:       | A prospective analysis of the effect of TVT retropubic and Monarc trans-obturator sling on lower urinary tract symptoms in women with urodynamic stress incontinence and intrinsic sphincter deficiency |
| Presenter/s: | Schierlitz L, Dwyer PL, Rosamilia A, Murray C, Thomas E, Taylor N, Hiscock R, Lim Y, Ahtari A, DeSouza A  |
| Conference:  | International Urogynecological Association Annual Scientific Meeting  |
| Location:    | Taipei, Taiwan  |
| Date:        | 2008  |
| Topic:       | Sexual function following retropubic TVT and transobturator Monarc sling in women with intrinsic sphincter deficiency   |
| Presenter/s: | DeSouza A, Schierlitz L, Dwyer PL, Rosamilia A, Murray C, Thomas E, Hiscock R, Lim Y  |
| Conference:  | International Urogynecological Association Annual Scientific Meeting  |
| Location:    | Taipei, Taiwan  |
| Date:        | 2008  |
| Topic:       | Urinary symptoms before and after female urethral diverticulectomy: Can we predict de-novo stress urinary incontinence?   |
| Presenter/s: | Stav K, Dwyer PL, Rosamilia A, Chao F   |
| Conference:  | International Urogynecological Association Annual Scientific Meeting  |
| Location:    | Taipei, Taiwan  |
| Date:        | 2008  |

Topic: Pelvic floor disorders and sexual function. Sexual dysfunction workshop. Treatment of interstitial cystitis.  
Presenter/s: Dwyer PL  
Conference: Painful Bladder Workshop, International Urogynaecological Association Annual Scientific Meeting  
Location: Taipei Taiwan  
Date: 2008

## Publications

Dwyer PL, Fatton B

Bilateral extraperitoneal uterosacral suspension: A new approach to correct posthysterectomy vaginal vault prolapse. *Int Urogynecol J Pelvic Floor Dysfunct.* 2008 19; 2:283-92.

O'Reilly BA, Fynes M, Achtari C, Hiscock R, Thomas E, Dwyer PL

A prospective randomised double-blind controlled trial evaluating the effect of trans-sacral magnetic stimulation in women with overactive bladder. *Int Urogynecol J Pelvic Floor Dysfunct.* 2008 19, 4; 497-502.

Dwyer PL, Kelleher C, Young J, Haab F, Lheritier K, Ariely A, Ebinger U

Long term benefits of Darifenacin treatment for patient quality of life: Results from a two year extension study. *Neurourol Urodynam* 2008 27, 6; 540-547.

Stav K, Dwyer PL, Rosamilia A, Chao F

Urinary symptoms before and after female urethral diverticulectomy. Can we predict de-novo stress urinary incontinence? *J Urol* 2008 180; 5; 288-290.

Schierlitz L, Dwyer PL, Rosamilia A, Murray C, Thomas E, De Souza A, Lim Y, Hiscock R

Tension free vaginal tape is more effective than the trans-obturator tape in women with stress urinary incontinence and intrinsic sphincter deficiency: A prospective randomised study. *Obstet Gynecol* 2008 112;6,1253-61.

Fatton B, Dwyer PL, Tan PK, Achtari C

Bilateral extraperitoneal uterosacral vaginal vault suspension: A two year follow-up longitudinal case series of 123 patients. *Int Urogynecol J Pelvic Floor Dysfunct.* 2008 Epub.

Stav K, Dwyer PL, Rosamilia A, Lim Y, Alcalay M

Transvaginal repair of anterior enterocele following anterior exenteration in females. *Int Urogynecol J Pelvic Floor Dysfunct.* Dec 17 2008 Epub.

Dwyer PL, book editor

*Atlas of Urogynaecological Endoscopy.* Informa Healthcare Publishers. London 2008.

### **Book chapters**

“History of endoscopy of the female urinary tract.” Robertson JR and Dwyer PL.

“Functional anatomy of the lower urinary tract.” DeSouza A and Dwyer PL.

“Cystourethroscopic instrumentation and equipment.” Tan PK and Dwyer PL.

“Cystourethroscopy: Technique, indications and complications.” Tan PK and Dwyer PL.

“Congenital urinary tract anomalies.” Dwyer PL.

“Urethral and periurethral conditions.” Dwyer PL.

“Infective and non-infective cystitis.” Rosamilia A and Dwyer PL.

“Interstitial cystitis/painful bladder syndrome/bladder pain syndrome.” Rosamilia A and Dwyer PL.

“Non-neoplastic abnormalities of the bladder.” Dwyer PL.

“Malignant conditions of the bladder and urethra.” Clarke A and Dwyer PL.

“Urogenital fistulae.” Schierlitz L and Dwyer PL.

“Role of cystourethroscopy in urogynaecological surgery.” Fatton B and Dwyer PL.

“Intraoperative cystourethroscopy in the prevention and treatment of urinary tract injury in gynaecological surgery.” Dwyer PL.

“Training requirements for endoscopy of the urinary tract in female pelvic medicine.” Dwyer PL.

## Department of Gynaecological Oncology, Mercy Hospital for Women



Associate Professor  
Peter Grant



Associate Professor David Allen

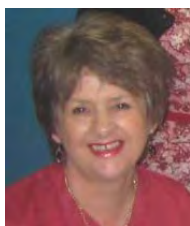


Dr Simon Hyde

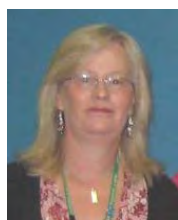
The Department of Gynaecological Oncology was involved in the treatment planning and delivery of care to more than 400 women with newly diagnosed cancer in 2008. The follow-up care of these women and the management of recurrent cancer ensures that the clinical caseload of the department is increasing and placing high demands on the dedicated staff.

The number of chemotherapy treatments increased by 20% over the past 12 months and the demand on the colposcopy/dysplasia service remains high. Despite all of these clinical commitments the members of the Gynaecological Oncology Unit continue to be involved in many academic and research pursuits, some of which are listed below.

The department has three certified gynaecological oncologists: Associate Professor Peter Grant (Head), Associate Professor David Allen (Deputy Head) and Dr Simon Hyde. Ms Bernadette Murray is the Clinical Nurse Consultant of Oncology and Well Women's Clinic, Ms Christine Smith is the department Data Manager, Ms Margaret Lowden is the Clinical Nurse Consultant Manager of the Chemotherapy area assisted by Ms Catherine Morell and Suzanne Stokes.



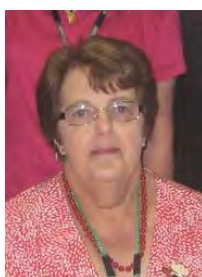
Ms Bernadette Murray



Ms Christine Smith



Ms Suzanne Stokes



Ms Margaret Lowden



Ms Catherine Morell

### **Advanced Medical Science (AMS) Student**

Associate Professor David Allen supervised an international Advanced Medical Science student, Tiara Melati, at the University of Melbourne in 2008 resulting in a successful thesis.

### **Publications**

Grant PT, Allen DG and Hyde SE are all collaborators in the Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.

Validating genetic risk associations for ovarian cancer through the international Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium.

Australian Cancer Study; Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.  
Br J Cancer. 2009 Jan 27;100(2):412-20. Epub 2009 Jan 6.

Polymorphism in the IL18 gene and epithelial ovarian cancer in non-Hispanic white women. Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium; Australian Cancer Study (Ovarian Cancer Group); Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.  
Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev. 2008 Dec;17(12):3567-72.

Endometrioid and clear cell ovarian cancers: A comparative analysis of risk factors. Australian Cancer Study Group; Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.  
Eur J Cancer. 2008 Nov;44(16):2477-84. Epub 2008 Aug 15.

Novel molecular subtypes of serous and endometrioid ovarian cancer linked to clinical outcome. Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.  
Clin Cancer Res. 2008 Aug 15;14(16):5198-208.

Consortium analysis of seven candidate SNPs for ovarian cancer. Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group; Australian Cancer Study (Ovarian Cancer), Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium.  
Int J Cancer. 2008 Jul 15;123(2):380-8.

Association between single-nucleotide polymorphisms in hormone metabolism and DNA repair genes and epithelial ovarian cancer: Results from two Australian studies and an additional validation set. Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group; Australian Cancer Study (Ovarian Cancer); Australian Breast Cancer Family Study.  
Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev. 2007 Dec;16(12):2557-65.

Serous ovarian, fallopian tube and primary peritoneal cancers: A comparative epidemiological analysis. Australian Cancer Study Group (Ovarian Cancer); Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.  
Int J Cancer. 2008 Apr 1;122(7):1598-603.

Recreational physical activity and epithelial ovarian cancer: A case control study, systematic review and meta-analysis. Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.  
Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev. 2007 Nov;16(11):2321-30. Review.

High resolution melting for mutation scanning of TP53 exons 5-8. Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.  
BMC Cancer. 2007 Aug 31;7:168.

Talcum powder, chronic pelvic inflammation and NSAIDs in relation to risk of epithelial ovarian cancer.

Australian Cancer Study (Ovarian Cancer); Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.  
Int J Cancer. 2008 Jan 1;122(1):170-6.

Risk factors for benign, borderline and invasive mucinous ovarian tumours: Epidemiological evidence of a neoplastic continuum?

Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group.  
Gynecol Oncol. 2007 Nov;107(2):223-30. Epub 2007 Jul 27.

Tagging single nucleotide polymorphisms in cell cycle control genes and susceptibility to invasive epithelial ovarian cancer.

Australian Ovarian Cancer Study Group; Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium.  
Cancer Res. 2007 Apr 1;67(7):3027-35.

Differentiated intraepithelial neoplasia of the vulva.

Mulvany NJ, Allen DG.  
Int J Gynecol Pathol. 2008 Jan;27(1):125-35.

Combined large cell neuroendocrine and endometrioid carcinoma of the endometrium.

Mulvany NJ, Allen DG.  
Int J Gynecol Pathol. 2008 Jan;27(1):49-57.

Diagnostic utility of p16INK4a: A reappraisal of its use in cervical biopsies.

Mulvany NJ, Allen DG, Wilson SM. Pathology. 2008 Jun;40(4):335-44. Review.

Phase II biomarker trial of a multimarker diagnostic for ovarian cancer.

Edgell T, Martin-Roussety G, Barker G, Autelitano DJ, Allen D, Grant P, Rice GE.  
Submitted for publication. Dec 2008.

Prognostic factors in high risk endometrium and adjuvant radiotherapy.

Narayan K, Allen DG, Quinn M, Jobling T, Bernshaw D, Herschtal A.  
Australian Radiology. 2008 (submitted).

### Original presentations

Topic: Sentinel lymph node identification in vulva cancer  
Presenter/s: Tan J, Grant PT, Allen DG, Hyde SE  
Conference: ASGO Annual Scientific Meeting  
Location: Hobart, Australia  
Date: 5-8 May 2008

Topic: Development of a multimedia consent module for patients having laser ablation of cervical dysplasia  
Presenter/s: Grant PT, Allen DG, Murray B, Freyne A  
Conference: Women's Hospital Australia Annual Scientific Meeting  
Location: Sydney, Australia  
Date: 20-21 November 2008

### Poster presentations

Poster: Chemotherapy induced hypersensitivity/anaphylaxis  
Presenter/s: Lowden M, Morell C, Stokes S  
Event: International Gynaecological Cancer Society Scientific Meeting  
Location: Bangkok, Thailand  
Date: October 2008



## Research projects

- SCOTROC trial. Dose escalation of carboplatin in the primary treatment of advanced ovarian cancer. ANZCOG national multicentre trial.
- TRIPOD. Intraperitoneal chemotherapy as primary treatment of advanced ovarian cancer. ANZCOG national multicentre trial.
- Evaluation of a multimedia consent module for patients having laser ablation of cervical dysplasia (Grant PT, Allen DG, Murray B, Freyne A)
- The oncogenic risk of human papillomavirus (HPV) in children and adolescents: Risk factors for early onset cervical carcinoma and high grade dysplasia
- Evaluation of a new multimarker diagnostics for ovarian cancer during chemotherapy and disease recurrence
- ICON7 – A randomised, two-arm, multicentre Gynaecologic Cancer InterGroup trial of adding bevacizumab to standard chemotherapy (carboplatin and paclitaxel) in patients with epithelial ovarian cancer
- Phase II randomised, double blind, multicentre study to assess the efficacy of AZD2281 in the treatment of patients with platinum sensitive serous ovarian cancer following treatment with two or more platinum containing regimens
- A human tissue bank for cancer research (conjoint project with Austin Hospital Tissue Bank)

## Invited speakers

Topic:	Update on vulvar premalignancy and malignancy
Presenter/s:	Hyde S
Conference:	Mercy Hospital Pathology Symposium
Date:	September 2008
Topic:	Endometriosis and malignancy
Presenter/s:	Grant P
Conference:	Mercy Hospital Pathology Symposium
Date:	September 2008
Topic:	Gynaecological malignancies and HNPCC
Presenter/s:	Allen DG
Conference:	Mercy Hospital Pathology Symposium
Date:	September 2008
Topic:	Vaginal, vulva cancers/genetics
Presenter/s:	Grant P
Conference:	Post International Gynaecological Cancer Society 2008 – Gynaecological Cancer
Location:	Melbourne, Australia
Date:	November 2008
Topic:	Oncology nursing update: Intraperitoneal chemotherapy
Presenter/s:	Grant P
Location:	Melbourne, Australia
Date:	July 2008

Topic: Don't miss the cancer. Advanced course in colposcopy.  
 Presenter/s: Allen DG  
 Conference: International Federation of Cervical Pathology and Colposcopy World Congress  
 Location: Auckland, New Zealand  
 Date: October 2008

Topic: The transformation zone. Colposcopy course and update.  
 Presenter/s: Allen DG  
 Conference: Australian Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology  
 Location: Adelaide, Australia  
 Date: April 2008

Topic: Colposcopy in the young and the old. Colposcopy course and update.  
 Presenter/s: Allen DG  
 Conference: Australian Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology  
 Location: Adelaide, Australia  
 Date: April 2008

Topic: Consequences of treatment. Colposcopy course and update.  
 Presenter/s: Allen DG  
 Conference: Australian Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology  
 Location: Adelaide, Australia  
 Date: April 2008

#### **Other academic and research activity**

- Associate Professor David Allen completed a two-year appointment as Chairman, VCOG, Executive Committee, Centre for Clinical Research in Cancer, Cancer Council of Victoria
- Associate Professor David Allen was elected Vice President of the Committee of Management, Australian Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology
- Associate Professor Peter Grant and Associate Professor David Allen were Examiners for Certification in Gynaecological Oncology (CGO), RANZCOG and the University of Melbourne undergraduate MBBS
- Associate Professor David Allen was elected to the Editorial Board, Journal of Lower Genital Tract Disease (USA)
- Associate Professor Peter Grant was an invited Peer Reviewer for Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, International Journal Gynaecological Cancer
- Associate Professor David Allen was an invited Peer Reviewer for Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Oncology, European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Reproductive Biology, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and International Urogynecology Journal
- Associate Professor Peter Grant was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of the National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre
- Associate Professor David Allen was appointed to two Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) subcommittees

## Department of Endosurgery, Mercy Hospital for Women

This department was established in 1994 under the auspices of the University of Melbourne's Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Associate Professor Peter Maher was appointed the inaugural Head.

A Fellowship Program was instituted the following year with the aim of improving skills in laparoscopic and hysteroscopic surgery. Since that time 11 gynaecologists have undergone specialised training in endosurgery. All but two of these doctors now practise in Melbourne.

In 2008 the department consisted of the following personnel:

*Peter Maher, Director; Simon Gordon; Emma Readman; David O'Callaghan; Janine Manwaring; Melissa Cameron; Kate McIlwaine; Christine Turvill, Secretary*

### Profiles



Associate Professor Peter Maher



Emma Readman

Peter Maher has been at Mercy Hospital for Women since 1974, except for two years during postgraduate study in the UK, 1978-79. He performed the first laparoscopic hysterectomy in Australia in 1991 and, after ceasing obstetric practice in 1995, concentrated on all aspects of minimally invasive surgery. Peter has written more than 10 book chapters and co-authored more than 100 articles in the medical literature. He has lectured and operated in many countries and is a reviewer for many international endoscopy and gynaecological journals. Peter is a past president of the Australian Gynaecological Society and is currently the president of the International Society for Gynecological Endoscopy.

Emma Readman is a gynaecologist and endoscopic surgeon working at Mercy Hospital for Women. She trained as a fellow in endoscopic surgery at the Mercy Hospital for Women and currently runs the outpatient hysteroscopy service.



Janine Manwaring



Melissa Cameron



Kate McIlwaine

Janine Manwaring was elevated to Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists on 31 January 2005. She is employed as Consultant Gynaecologist, General and Endosurgery Units, Mercy Hospital for Women. She is involved in student and registrar teaching programs and is an instructor in basic and advanced surgical skills RANZCOG workshops.

Melissa Cameron completed her training in obstetrics and gynaecology in 2006 and is a keen researcher with current projects involving patient education and consent, imaging and diagnosis of severe endometriosis and the effect of body mass index on laparoscopic gynaecological surgery. She holds public gynaecology appointments at Mercy Hospital for Women, The Royal Women's Hospital and the Royal Children's Hospital, and plays an active role in the education of medical students and RANZCOG trainees.

Kate McIlwaine obtained her FRANZCOG in February 2008. In 2008 she was employed as the endosurgery fellow at Mercy Hospital for Women. As the endosurgery fellow she is active in the implementation of studies and recruitment of patients for participation in research trials within the unit. She presented two papers at the World Congress of Gynaecologic Endoscopy in Bari, Italy in June 2008 entitled "Outpatient hysteroscopy: Factors influencing postprocedure acceptability in patients attending a tertiary referral centre" (McIlwaine, Readman, Cameron, Maher) and "The effects of heated, humidified carbon dioxide in laparoscopy: A randomised, controlled trial" (Cameron, McIlwaine, Maher).

Kate is the principal investigator in a pilot study currently underway at Mercy Hospital for Women assessing the effect of increased BMI on surgical difficulty in 60 women undergoing laparoscopic gynaecological surgery. She is associate investigator with Dr Readman in the unit's latest research project entitled "Endometrial nerve fibres in endometriosis and their response to surgical and hormonal therapy: A prospective randomised trial", which is currently awaiting ethics approval.

### **Book chapters**

Cameron M, Maher P

Laparoscopic assisted vaginal hysterectomy and abnormal uterine bleeding. Modern management of abnormal uterine bleeding. Eds O'Donovan P, Miller C. 2008. Informa Healthcare, United Kingdom ISBN 10:0415 454 79.

Cameron M, Maher P

Barrier solutions or solid barriers in prevention of postoperative adhesions. The fallopian tube. Eds Allahbadia G, Saridogan E, Djahanbakhch O. Publishers Ansham Ltd, India 2008.

Rombauts L, Tsaltas J, Maher P, Healy D (Eds)  
Endometriosis 2008. Blackwell Publishing, Australia, 2008.

Maher CF, Maher PJ

Laparoscopy in urogynaecology. Atlas of Urogynaecological Endoscopy. Peter L Dwyer. CRC Press. 2007. ISBN 184184540X.

Manwaring J, Readman E, Maher PJ

The effect of heated humidified carbon dioxide on postoperative pain, core temperature and recovery times in patients having laparoscopic surgery: A randomised control trial. *Minim. Access Surg.* 2008, 15:2;161-165.

## **Publications**

Readman E, Maher PJ

Pain relief and outpatient hysteroscopy: A literature review. *Journal of the American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists.* 11(3):315-9, 2004 Aug.

Readman E, Maher PJ, Ugoni AM, Gordon S

Intraperitoneal ropivacaine and a gas drain: Effects on postoperative pain in laparoscopic surgery. *Journal of the American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists.* 11(4):486-91, 2004.

Readman E, Maher PJ

Pain mapping, awake laparoscopy and chronic pelvic pain. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology.* 43(4):324-5, 2003 Aug.

Appleton B, Targett C, Rasmussen M, Readman E, Sale F, Permezel M

Knowledge and attitudes about vaginal birth after caesarean section in Australian hospitals. VBAC Study Group. *Vaginal birth after caesarean.* *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology.* 40(2):195-9, 2000 May.

Appleton B, Targett C, Rasmussen M, Readman E, Sale F, Permezel M

Vaginal birth after caesarean section: An Australian multicentre study. VBAC Study Group. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology.* 40(1):87-91, 2000 Feb.

Ong, NCS, Maher PJ, Payman JM, Readman E, Gordon S

Endosalpingiosis, an unrecognised condition: Report and literature review. *Gynaecological Surgery.* 1(1) 2004 March.

Manwaring J, Readman E, Maher P

The effect of heated humidified carbon dioxide on postoperative pain, core temperature and recovery times in patients having laparoscopic surgery: A randomised controlled trial. *Journal of Minimally Invasive Gynaecology.* 15:2, 2008, 161-165.

Kothari A, Bethune M, Manwaring J, et al

Bilateral phaechromocytomas associated with von Hippel-Lindau syndrome in pregnancy. *ANZJOG;* 39(3):381-4, 1999 Aug.

Manwaring J, Readman E, Maher P

The effect of heated, humidified carbon dioxide on postoperative pain and recovery times in patients having laparoscopic surgery: A prospective randomised controlled trial. *JMIG* 2008; 15: 161-165.

Cameron M, Grover S

Non-chromosomal, non-iatrogenic premature ovarian failure in an adolescent population: A case series. *Journal of Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology,* 2007.

Cameron M, Maher P

Laparoscopic-assisted vaginal hysterectomy. Modern management of abnormal uterine bleeding. Eds. O'Donovan PJ, Miller CE. Informa Healthcare, London, 2008.

Cameron M, Maher P

Barrier solutions or solid barriers for prevention of postoperative adhesions. The fallopian tube. Eds. Allahbadia G, Saridogan E, Djahanbakhch O. Publisher: Anshan Ltd. 2008.

Mcllwaine K, Kneebone K, Barkehall-Thomas A, Wallace EM

Compliance with a risk factor based intrapartum prophylaxis program for neonatal group B streptococcal disease. Aust NZ J Obstet Gynaecol 44: 199-201. 2006.

Mulvey S, Zachariah R, Mcllwaine K, Wallace E

Do women prefer to have screening tests for Down syndrome that have the lowest screen-positive rate or the highest detection rate? Prenat Diag 23: 828-832. 2006.

### **Research projects**

- Use of heated humidified carbon dioxide in laparoscopy – effect on postoperative pain and recovery times in patients having laparoscopic surgery lasting more than 90 minutes: A randomised control trial
- Applying education theory to the informed consent process using a web based multimedia application (Claydon-Platt D, Manwaring J, Cameron M, Maher P, Beischer A)
- The use of timed MRI during the menstrual cycle in patients with severe recto-vaginal endometriosis in determining rectal wall involvement
- The effect of BMI on surgical difficulty and safety in laparoscopic gynaecological surgery

# Division of Clinical Support, Mercy Hospital for Women

## Social Work/Aboriginal Women and Family Support Unit

The Social Work Department works very closely with nursing, medical, other allied health staff and the Aboriginal Women and Family Support Unit to offer a holistic approach to patient care. Particular social workers are allocated to specific areas within the hospital and work as part of an integrated team of health professionals. There are designated social workers attached to the Oncology Department, the Department of Paediatrics, the Transitions Clinic and particular Obstetric Units. Social workers are available to see patients from other units on referral. The Aboriginal Women and Family Support Unit offers support to Indigenous patients and their families, in particular the patients of the Transitions Clinic. The Transitions Clinic is a highly innovative obstetric clinic offering specialist care to Indigenous women, chemically dependent women and very young women. The work of the Social Work Department, the Aboriginal Women and Family Support Unit and of this clinic has been recognised by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing in the funding program which, along with other research interests and programs, is outlined below.

### Research project

- PhD thesis: A limitation on the applicability of theory to ethics: With special reference to concerns which arise within the context of serious illness (Genevieve Green)

### Publication

Lisa McGowan and the multidisciplinary special care nursery and neonatal nursery team. Parenting your baby in the neonatal nursery. Mercy Public Hospitals Inc. 2008.

### Presentations at conferences

Topics:	“From colonisation to conciliation: A collaborative examination of social work practice with Indigenous populations” “Perceptions of social work practice with Indigenous communities: Findings from a national study”
Presenter/s:	Jane Middleton
Conference:	AASW conference
Date:	2008

### Visiting speakers and researchers

Topic:	The importance of accurate identification of Aboriginal patients
Presenter/s:	Department of Human Services and Australian Bureau of Statistics
Date:	2008
Topic:	Why there cannot be a science of human behaviour
Presenter/s:	Professor Haim Marantz, Ben-Gurion University, Israel
Conference:	Interdisciplinary Seminar
Date:	2008

## Research funding

Source:	Ian Potter Foundation
Name:	I'm a Mum – Volunteer support program (In partnership with Children's Protection Society)
Amount:	\$270,000
Duration:	Three years
Source:	Department of Health and Ageing New Directions Program
Name:	New Directions: An equal start in life for Indigenous children New Directions aims to “provide Indigenous mothers, babies and children with health care and early learning support during the antenatal phase, through childbirth and until their child reaches eight. The five priority areas of the program are: (1) Access to antenatal care for women pregnant with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child (ATSI); (2) Standard information about baby care for mothers of ATSI children; (3) Practical advice and assistance with breastfeeding, nutrition and parenting skills for mothers of ATSI children; (4) Monitoring of ATSI children's weight gain, immunisation status, infections and early developmental milestones by a dedicated primary health care service; and (5) Testing, early detection and timely treatment of ATSI children's hearing, sight, speech and other developmental issues before starting school.
Amount:	\$400,000
Duration:	Four years
Source:	Australian Research Council
Name:	From colonisation to conciliation: A collaborative examination of social work practice with Indigenous populations
Amount:	\$250,000
Duration:	Three years (2006-09)

Research undertaken in collaboration with University of Melbourne, Royal Children's Hospital, RMIT University and Michigan State University.

## Fundraising for oncology research nurse

Special mention should be made of fundraising efforts by Sr Rosemary Duck RSM for the employment of a nurse to support the ovarian cancer research being undertaken by the Gynaecological Oncology Department, Mercy Hospital for Women. Sr Rosemary played a leadership role within the committees and acted as liaison between the fundraising committee and other members of the oncology team. Over \$60,000 was raised.



## Achievements



Dr Genevieve Green

Name:	Genevieve Green
Degree:	Doctor of Philosophy, School of Philosophy, University of Melbourne. PhD conferred August 2008, University of Melbourne.
Thesis:	"A limitation on the applicability of theory to ethics: With special reference to concerns which arise within the context of serious illness"
Abstract:	There is, it is argued, that about human life, and pre-eminently about what we might call our moral life, which seriously limits the extent to which ethical theory can be applied to it. The Utilitarian, the Kantian and the Aristotelian ethical approaches are examined. It is argued that despite the great differences between these approaches they all share a common failing. Each fails to do justice to the open-ended nature of our moral life. The thesis proceeds mainly by way of examples, many of which are drawn from experiences as a social worker within a specialist cancer unit. These examples are given in the belief that serious illness and the care and treatment of people who are seriously ill can reveal something of importance about our moral life more generally.

## Collaborations and research staff

Genevieve Green is the Mercy Allied Health representative on the North Eastern Integrated Cancer Services (NEMICS) gynaecological tumour stream and has been actively involved in NEMICS initiatives in research, documentation and service improvement. NEMICS is part of an integrated program of the Victorian Department of Human Services Cancer and Palliative Care Unit. The aim of the integrated program is to achieve statewide best practice cancer care. Throughout 2008 Genevieve was involved in researching and implementing best practice supportive care. "A guide for implementing supportive care", draft May 2008, "Implementing supportive care: The draft toolkit", May 2008 and "NEMICS Supportive Care Directory" are to be completed December 2009.

"From colonisation to conciliation: A collaborative examination of social work practice with indigenous populations" was written with the University of Melbourne, the Royal Children's Hospital and Michigan State University School of Social Work. Jane Middleton.

"I'm an Aboriginal Dad", Vera Webber and Jane Middleton in collaboration with Children's Protection Society. This initiative is for Aboriginal men whose partners are attending the Mercy Hospital for Women Transitions Clinic and aims to establish a culturally appropriate men's program to meet the needs of young Aboriginal fathers.

The initiative provides support and counselling to individuals and couples, and seeks to support and strengthen relationships between partners and/or between men and their children in a culturally sensitive way.

“I’m a Mum”, Jane Middleton. An initiative in partnership with Children’s Protection Society and Banyule Community Health Service. The purpose of the initiative is to establish, monitor and evaluate a service for young vulnerable mothers and their babies. Recent research in the science of early childhood development has demonstrated that secure, nurturing and responsive relationships between babies and their carers, especially during early childhood years, provides a strong foundation for learning and development.

## Pastoral Care Department

### Presentation

Topic: Mosaics and mystery: Pastoral care, clinical supervision and public health  
Presenter/s: Mary Klasen  
Conference: 40 Years of Clinical Pastoral Education in Australia  
Date: 2008

### Visiting speaker and researcher

- Ms Deborah Kent, Mercy Ethos Co-ordinator conducted a workshop with the Pastoral Care Department regarding the meaning of mercy in a multicultural, multifaith environment

## Lymphoedema Clinic

### Research projects

- Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program: Continuation of Garment Review and Information Project to implementation phase during 2008
- Dr Yvonne Zwar: Member of a working party with the General Practice Divisions of Victoria to develop education modules on lymphoedema for general practitioners
- Dr Yvonne Zwar: Member of National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre Research in Lymphoedema Working Party
- Penny Sanderson and Judy Purbrick served as committee members to the Eastern Health Review of Lymphoedema Services Project

### Publication and conference attendance

Purbrick J  
Lymphoedema. The Australian Physiotherapy Association Magazine, Physiotherapy and You, October 2008.

Topic: Exercise your mind; Stretch your boundaries  
Attendee/s: Six clinic staff  
Conference: The Biennial Australasian Lymphology Conference (ALA)  
Location: Freemantle, Western Australia  
Date: 2008

## Presentations

- Papers for 2008 ALA conference included “Developing an Australian model of care for lymphoedema”. Presented by Judy Purbrick and Penelope Sanderson.
- “Starting with youth: Development and evaluation of youth focused practice”. Presented by Jackie D'Abaco and Penelope Sanderson.
- “Lymphoedema self-management: A program evaluation”. Poster presented by Gillian Buckley.
- “Setting the standard for lymphoedema compression garments”. Poster presented by Sherry Rasmussen and Pauline Young.
- Drs S Hodson, F Alberico and Y Zwar presented at the Victorian RACGP Conference, Melbourne
- Judy Purbrick was invited speaker to address the Oncology Nurses of Victoria (August 2008) and the Western Radiology Department (May 2008)
- Annual lecture to final year physiotherapy students at the University of Melbourne on lymphoedema
- Invited speakers at the annual general meeting of the Lymphoedema Practitioners Education Group of Victoria. Penelope Sanderson, Sherry Rasmussen and Pauline Young.

## Visiting speaker and researcher

- Dr Rod Phillips from the Royal Children's Hospital Vascular Anomalies Clinic addressed a clinic in-service August 2008

## Research funding

Source: Department of Human Services  
Name: Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program – GRIP funding  
Amount: \$10,000

## Awards and achievements

- Jane Phillips received a Mercy Health scholarship to undertake a graduate certificate in the Self-Management of Chronic Diseases at Flinders University

## Collaborations

- Collaboration with the Western and Central Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service to produce the Lymphoedema Networked Service Delivery Model currently presented to the Department of Human Services Cancer Unit
- Working with Breacan (project of Women's Health Victoria) to deliver annual education session in a community setting
- Working with the University of Melbourne to provide placement for Masters students in lymphoedema for the first time

## Medical Imaging Department



### Research

The Medical Imaging Department has been involved with two research projects approved by the Mercy Health Human Research Ethics Committee that require the use of 3D ultrasound analysis.

The first is a project called “The variance in bone size in adulthood originates before birth”. This requires a number of measurements on a foetus at 20 and 30 weeks, the most important being the volume of the femur. Over 300 patients are required and, while this is a large number, patients have been very keen to participate. We are hoping to establish when bone density is developed and what factors influence it. This study has about half of all the ultrasound examinations performed, but with all the analysis still to be done.

The other project is “Comparison of (pathological) hyperfiltration of diabetes with (physiological) hyperfiltration of pregnancy”. This study requires 60 participants having 3D ultrasound examinations of their kidneys to estimate renal volume. Each patient is scanned before, during and after pregnancy. Recruitment is a little more difficult as there are blood tests involved. This study is just beginning.

The increase in workload at the department has been noticeable at times; however, most of the extra examinations are now being performed after hours.

### Publication

L Hennington, M Goodwin, V Saxton, B Davies, M Bethune  
“Uterine vascular malformations from start to finish”, RSNA eposter, 2008.

### Teaching

Medical:

- There is a one hour weekly tutorial on reading neonatal X-rays given to paediatric and radiology registrars. Informal teaching is given daily to rotating radiology registrars.

Sonographer:

- There is a weekly in-house sonographer teaching session
- There is always one sonographer in training from an outside department rotating through Medical Imaging for the obstetric and gynaecology component of their training. Most spend eight weeks with the Medical Imaging Department.
- We are in the process of planning to extend our sonographer training by taking on a trainee sonographer from within. We hope this will commence in 2009.

## Department of Paediatrics, Mercy Hospital for Women

*Clinical Director and Department Head: Andrew Watkins*

*Deputy Head: Dan Casalaz*

*Neonatologists: Philip Henschke, Charles Barfield, Gillian Opie, Jim Holberton, Martina Moorkamp, Clare Collins, Kai König, Joel Sadowsky*

*Fellows: Sabine Pfeiffer, Vladena Shkarlat, Deena Parbhoo, Ethel Ryan*

*Growth and Development Clinic Co-ordinators: Heather Woods, Emma Marchant*

*Growth and Development Clinic Neuropsychologists: Elaine Kelly, Amanda Williamson*

*Developmental Paediatricians: Growth and Development Clinic: Noni Davis, Emma Magrath, Anne Marie Turner*

*Research Nurses: Chelsea Webster, Julie Keng, Deborah Wilson*

The Department of Paediatrics is one of four tertiary neonatal intensive care units in Victoria, providing intensive care to infants from Victoria, southern New South Wales and northern Tasmania. The normal capacity of the unit is 18 NICU cots with the ability to flex up to 20. The total number of beds in the department is 58 and we provide an extensive outpatient paediatric service on three sites.

The research activities of the unit are dominated by clinical research, with the central focus being on the management of the extremely low birthweight infants in neonatal intensive care and the long term outcomes of these infants.

The main thrust of departmental research in recent years has been focused on innovative means to provide non-invasive respiratory support in an attempt to minimise the trauma of intensive care for extremely low birthweight infants. The focus has been on the validation of high flow nasal prongs as a means by which CPAP support can be provided, and we are now commencing a randomised controlled trial of their use in postextubation management of premature infants. Other projects in neonatal intensive care include studies of oxygen delivery and blood pressure in intensive care together with an examination of the use of agents such as milrinone in the circulatory management of critically ill babies.

Chronic lung disease is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in the extremely low birthweight infant. The early understanding of its aetiology as being related to the mechanical trauma of assisted ventilation has been shown to be overly simplistic and there is now considerable interest in the contribution of the inflammatory cascade to developmental lung injury. The department is pursuing studies examining the use of Sildenafil to modulate the inflammatory response in early lung disease, this agent is already in use in the treatment of pulmonary hypertension in more advanced disease.

The department also has a strong interest in nutrition and is involved in a number of studies examining the use of probiotics as food additives to improve infant nutrition and development. We are also in the final stages of establishing Victoria's first BreastMilk Bank through Mercy Health Foundation, under the direction of Dr Gillian Opie, which will both reduce our dependence on infant formula and provide better nutrition for infants while providing many research opportunities. The Mercy BreastMilk Bank will be only the second in Australia and will open up an exciting range of clinical and research opportunities.

The long term outcome of extremely low birthweight infants is an important research area. The department has conducted a comprehensive neurodevelopmental follow up program for many years through the Growth and Development Clinic. This clinic provides exhaustive neuropsychological and medical assessments to extremely low birthweight infant survivors and control infants, allowing an excellent understanding of their long term outcome in comparison with normal term infants. This knowledge is of great importance in the management of infants in the early days of life and is also invaluable in the ethical and economic debate around the provision of neonatal intensive care at the margins of viability.

A good understanding of long term outcome is also needed when assessing the impact of antenatal interventions such as repeated doses of steroids to mature the infant lung, to ensure that interventions offered do not have any unforeseen neurodevelopmental effects. Infants involved in studies of antenatal interventions such as Glucocorticoid (steroid) treatment, magnesium to prevent cerebral palsy and Thyrotropin releasing hormone have been studied in the clinic over the years, which often provide critical information.

A variety of other studies examining parenting support, music therapy and developmental care are also under way in the department. The unifying theme being the need to make the stay of a family in neonatal intensive care and special care as gentle and atraumatic as possible, with minimal long term developmental and psychological sequelae for the infant and family.

### Publications

Collins CL, Andersen CC

A deceptive simplicity: Systemic oxygen delivery and pulse oximetry. *J Paediatr Child Health*. 2007 Jul-Aug;43(7-8):510-2.

Wilkinson DJ, Casalaz D, Watkins A, et al

Hypothermia: A neuroprotective therapy for neonatal hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy. *Pediatrics* 2007; 119(2): 422-3.

Gelbart B, Barfield C, Watkins A

Ethics of video recording of neonatal resuscitation. *J.Medical Ethics* 2009; 35(2):120.

Wong FY, Barfield CP, Campbell L, Brodecky VA, Walker AM

Validation of cerebral venous oxygenation measured using near-infrared spectroscopy and partial jugular venous occlusion in the newborn lamb. *J Cereb Blood Flow Metab*. 2008 Jan;28(1):74-80. Epub 2007 May 9.

### Presentations

Poster:	Enteral glucose and electrolyte solution versus IV fluids: A randomised controlled trial in newborns.
Presenter/s:	Collins CL, Joshi D, Wilson D, Andersen CC
Event:	PSANZ 2007 (Paediatric Society of Australia and New Zealand)
Topic:	Colonisation of the adult and premature infant gut by ingested probiotic powder (Abstract presentation)
Presenter/s:	Tobin J, Jacobs S, Pirota M, Tabrizi S, Opie G, Lewis A, Tang M, Donath S, Kiely B, Fleming P, Ung L, Morley CJ, Garland S
Conference:	Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand ASM
Date:	April 2008

Topic: Diabetes and antenatal milk expressing (DAME): A pilot project to investigate the development of a randomised control trial  
 Presenter/s: Della Forster, Kerri McEgan, Gillian Opie, Anita Moorhead, Catharine McNamara, Susan Walker, Rachael Ford, Deborah Boyce  
 Conference: Australasian Diabetes in Pregnancy Society Meeting  
 Location: Adelaide, Australia  
 Date: November 2008

Topic: Practical and ethical aspects of the Victorian neonatal intensive care bed allocation system  
 Presenter/s: Watkins A  
 Conference: Australasian Bioethics Association Annual Conference  
 Location: Melbourne, Australia  
 Date: 2007

Topic: Why are parents rewarded for bad behaviour in this unit?  
 Presenter/s: Galbally M, Watkins A  
 Conference: Workshop: Annual Scientific Meeting, World Federation for Infant Mental Health  
 Location: Yokohama, Japan  
 Date: August 2008

Topic: Use of Milrinone in extremely low birthweight infants in neonatal intensive care (Oral presentation)  
 Presenter/s: König K  
 Conference: Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand. Annual Scientific Meeting  
 Date: 2008

### Lectures

Topic: Infection control in the neonatal intensive care  
 Presenter/s: Watkins A (Invited speaker)  
 Conference: Guangdong Regional Obstetric and Neonatal Scientific Meeting  
 Location: Guangzhou, China  
 Date: July 2008

Topic: Non-invasive respiratory support in neonatal intensive care  
 Presenter/s: Watkins A (Invited speaker)  
 Conference: Guangdong Regional Obstetric and Neonatal Scientific Meeting  
 Location: Guangzhou, China  
 Date: July 2008

Topic: Fire evacuation of a neonatal intensive care: Lessons learned  
 Presenter/s: Watkins A (Invited speaker)  
 Conference: Guangdong Regional Obstetric and Neonatal Scientific Meeting  
 Location: Guangzhou, China  
 Date: July 2008

Topic: Leap into breastfeeding. Two lectures: (1) Milk banking; (2) Feeding special needs babies.  
 Presenter/s: Gillian Opie  
 Conference: Australian College Midwives, Alpine Sub-Branch  
 Date: February 2008

- Topic: Breastmilk: Research and banking  
 Presenter/s: Gillian Opie  
 Conference: Graduate Diploma in Neonatal Intensive Care nursing course (La Trobe University)  
 Date: March 2008
- Topic: IMPACT Workshop: DAME study (Diabetes and Antenatal Milk Expressing)  
 Presenter/s: Gillian Opie  
 Conference: Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand Annual Scientific Meeting  
 Date: 2008
- Topic: Breastmilk, viral transmission and milk banking  
 Presenter/s: Gillian Opie  
 Conference: Australian Breastfeeding Association, Lactation Resource Centre, Research Ethics  
 Date: May 2008
- Topic: (1) Infant formula; (2) Growing up naturally (WHO Growth Charts)  
 Presenter/s: Gillian Opie  
 Conference: Lectures: West Melbourne Division of General Practice  
 Date: June 2008
- Topic: Neonatal nutrition (Parts 1 and 2)  
 Presenter/s: Gillian Opie  
 Conference: Graduate Diploma in Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing Course  
 Location: La Trobe University  
 Date: August 2008
- Topic: Human milk banking: The evidence  
 Presenter/s: Gillian Opie  
 Conference: Australian Lactation Consultants Association (Hunter Branch)  
 Date: November 2008
- Topic: Complex feeding issues  
 Presenter/s: Gillian Opie  
 Conference: Neonatal Nursing Course  
 Location: Mercy Hospital for Women  
 Date: November 2008
- Topic: High flow nasal cannulae: Alternative to CPAP?  
 Presenter/s: Kai König  
 Conference: Charité Krankenhaus  
 Location: Berlin, Germany  
 Date: June 2008

### Research grants

- Source: Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies  
 Name: Randomised controlled trial of high flow nasal cannulae and nasal CPAP in extubation of premature infants  
 Recipient/s: Collins C, Holberton J  
 Amount: \$22,000  
 Duration: 2008



Source:	Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies
Name:	Comparison of high flow nasal cannulae and nasal CPAP in premature infants
Recipient/s:	Collins C, Holberton
Amount:	\$30,000
Duration:	2007
Source:	Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies
Name:	An investigation of the correlation between plasma B-type natriuretic peptide and cardiac output in preterm infants
Recipient/s:	König K, Collins C
Amount:	\$30,000
Duration:	2007-08
Source:	Medical Research Foundation for Women and Babies
Name:	Biomarkers of inflammation in early chronic lung disease in premature infants
Recipient/s:	König K
Amount:	\$29,950
Duration:	2008
Source:	Windermere Foundation
Name:	An assessment of music therapy in the care of premature infants
Recipient/s:	Casalaz D, Watkins A, Dearne P
Amount:	\$15,000
Duration:	2007-08

### Research projects

- Assessment of neonatal resuscitation performance using video recording in a perinatal centre
- VICS cohort 1991-92: Outcome in adolescence of extremely low birthweight infants
- VICS cohort 2005: Long term neurodevelopmental outcome of extremely low birthweight infants
- Long term neurodevelopmental outcome of infants treated with caffeine for apnoea of prematurity
- Long term neurodevelopmental outcome of infants treated with repeated doses of antenatal glucocorticoids for prevention of respiratory distress syndrome (ACTORDS trial)
- Randomised controlled trial of Sildenafil in early chronic lung disease
- A comparison of invasive and non-invasive blood pressure monitoring in the intensive care management of extremely low birthweight infants
- Randomised controlled trial of use of high flow nasal prongs in postextubation support of premature infants
- Comparison of pharyngeal and oesophageal pressures in infants being supported with high flow nasal prongs
- Use of probiotics in early neonatal feeding: A randomised controlled trial
- Music therapy in management of premature infants
- Haemodynamic effects of Milrinone in neonatal intensive care
- Effect of second courses of indomethacin in management of the patent ductus arteriosus
- Effect of different strains of BCG on immunisation success in neonates
- Parent training in neurodevelopmental care of premature infants: An assessment

## Mercy Palliative Care

Mercy Palliative Care cares for people with a life threatening illness and supports the care of the patient and their family in their own homes. Mercy Palliative Care is a community resource covering the City of Brimbank, City of Hobsons Bay, City of Maribyrnong, City of Melbourne, City of Moonee Valley, City of Wyndham and the Shire of Melton.

Our team includes a specialist palliative care physician, nurses, counsellors, family support volunteers, music therapist, pastoral care, culturally and linguistically diverse worker and bereavement support.

The service is free of charge and available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Mercy Palliative Care has received over 1,100 referrals over the past 12 months with our youngest patient being 44 days old and our oldest patient aged 103. We provide care to over 250 patients at any one time with approximately 60 patients dying each month.

Follow up with bereaved family, carers and friends continues for 12 months after the patient's death. We do not have a waiting list for service. Over 5,000 family members, carers and friends per year are touched by our service.

### Research

Mercy Palliative Care participates in research in different areas. During 2007 we engaged in research with **beyondblue** titled "Toward the identification and minimisation of depression and psychological distress in family caregivers of people receiving palliative care". Phase one was completed in the 18 months to July 2008 and research has commenced on phase two, which is associated with follow up of carers after the patient's death. This is a multisite research activity with several phases, including rigorously screening family caregivers of people with advanced disease (such as cancer) for depression and psychological distress (eg complicated grief anxiety). The second phase seeks to develop best practice guidelines for health professionals in order to better respond to and minimise depression and psychological distress in this population. (Grant application pending.)

### Research projects

- Participants in Stage 3 of **beyondblue** research through Centre Palliative Care
- To commence pilot project for La Trobe University on Advanced Care Planning documentation

### Conferences

Mercy Palliative Care staff presented at various conferences in the specialty areas of palliative care and loss and grief.

- Palliative Care Victoria Conference, Melbourne, October 2008 – Two presentations
- Music Therapy Conference, Queensland, September 2008 – One presentation
- 8th International Conference on Loss and Grief, July 08 – Two presentations
- Inaugural Social Work Colloquium, Sydney, February 2008 – One presentation
- Palliative Care Nurses Australia, Adelaide, September 2008 – Two presentations
- Catholic Health Australia Conference, Adelaide, September 2008 – One presentation

## Birth Suite, Mercy Hospital for Women

### Presentations at conferences

Topic:	WEBS: Weighing up the evidence in birth suite – Exploring the depth of the evidence-practice gap in vaginal examinations and amniotomy in labour
Presenter/s:	Michelle Newton (previous clinical midwife consultant Mercy Hospital for Women) presented a portion of the WEBS projects
Conference:	Royal College of Midwives 28th International Triennial Congress
Location:	Glasgow, Scotland
Date:	1-5 June 2008

### Achievements

Name:	Rebecca Collins
Degree:	Master of Midwifery Science
Thesis:	PINK ANEW: An evaluation of a pilot program to enhance the knowledge and skills of midwives encountering psychosocial issues in the early postnatal period

### Awards

Name:	Melissa Mazzarino
Award:	ANF Irving Buzzard Award for Clinical and Theoretical Excellence, November 2007

### Research projects

Research:	PINK ANEW: An evaluation of a pilot program to enhance the knowledge and skills of midwives encountering psychosocial issues in the early postnatal period
Student Researcher:	Rebecca Collins
Research Supervisor:	Della Forster (Previous CMC, MHW; Current CMC RWH, Research Fellow La Trobe University Mother and Child Health Research)
Research Supervisor:	Helen McLachlan (Research Fellow La Trobe University; Mother and Child Health Research; Senior Midwifery Lecturer La Trobe University)
Location:	Mercy Hospital for Women, Barwon Health, La Trobe University
Research:	WEBS: Weighing up the evidence in birth suite
Student Researcher:	Melissa Mazzarino
Research Supervisor:	Professor Susan McDonald (La Trobe University, Mercy Hospital for Women)
Collaborators:	Michelle Newton (Previous CMC and current La Trobe University Midwifery Lecturer); Della Forster; Alison Wagstaffe (MHW CMC); Caroline Carr (MHW CMC); Professor Leah Albers (University of New Mexico, USA)

# Special Care Nursery, Werribee Mercy Hospital

## Research projects

- Doctor of Nursing research project: "How parents cope and adjust with the transfer of their infants from Level 3 Neonatal Intensive Care Units to Level 2 Special Care Nurseries in Victoria, Australia". In progress at six sites. Louisa Ramudu.

## Publication

Ramudu, L

Book Review: Primary care of the premature infant. Eds Brodsky D and Ouellette MA. Neonatal, Paediatrics and Child Health Journal. 11 (1) 30, 2008.

## Research funding

Source: La Trobe University  
Name: Postgraduate Support Grant  
Amount: \$500  
Duration: One year

## Achievements and awards

Name: Louisa Ramudu  
Degree: 1990 – Bachelor of Applied Science (Adv.Clinical Nsg); 1996 – Master of Educational Studies; 2004 – Diploma of Business. In progress 2002-2010 Doctor of Nursing Candidate, La Trobe University – commenced thesis component  
Professional: Melbourne Metropolitan Representative for Neonatal Services Advisory Committee, DHS, Victoria, L Ramudu  
Clinical Leader, Werribee Mercy Hospital – Implementation of "Vulnerable babies, children and young persons at risk of harm. Best practice framework for acute health services."

## Research staff

*Principal Supervisor: Professor Susan McDonald (La Trobe University)*

*Co-Supervisor: Professor Shane Thomas (Monash University)*

*Associate Researchers: Laura Bignell (Mercy Hospital for Women); Sheri Waldron (Royal Children's Hospital); Kathy Marshall and Fay Presbury (The Royal Women's Hospital); Lee Hooper (Sunshine Hospital); Helen Jenkin (The Northern Hospital); Alyson Smith (Geelong Hospital)*

## New Projects Approved by Mercy Health Human Research Ethics Committee

Project Number:	R08/01
Project:	The use of endometrial stem cells in experimental myocardial infarction
Researcher/s:	Professor Ray Garry, Associate Professor Peter Maher, Dr Melissa Cameron
Collaborative Partners:	Mercy Hospital for Women, University of Melbourne
Project Number:	R08/02
Project:	The effect of timing of menstrual cycle on interpretation of pelvic MRI and prediction of disease severity in patients with deep pelvic endometriosis
Researcher/s:	Dr Melissa Cameron, Associate Professor Peter Maher
Collaborative Partners:	Mercy Hospital for Women, Austin Health
Project Number:	R08/03W
Project:	Integration between specialist mental health services and primary care
Researcher/s:	Dr Terence Chong
Project Number:	R08/04
Project:	What is the impact of emergency antenatal transfer of women and does their perception of their situation change over time?
Researchers:	Professor Susan McDonald, Associate Professor Susan Walker
Collaborative Partners:	Mercy Hospital for Women, La Trobe University
Project Number:	R08/06
Project:	Social, biological, genetic and environmental determinants of health in adolescence of extremely low birthweight or extreme prematurity
Researchers:	Professor Lex Doyle, Dr Andrew Watkins, Dr Gillian Opie
Collaborative Partners:	Mercy Hospital for Women, Royal Women's Hospital, Royal Children's Hospital, Monash Medical Centre, Monash University, University of Melbourne
Project Number:	R07/59
Project:	A review of the current actual pathway for colorectal cancer patients against the ideal patient management framework (PMF) to scope a co-ordinator position within the Western and Central Metropolitan Integrated Cancer Service hospitals
Researcher/s:	Mr Iain Skinner
Collaborative Partners:	Werribee Mercy Hospital, Western and Central Melbourne Integrated Cancer Services
Project Number:	R07/58
Project:	Development of guidelines for consistent follow up for upper GI, skin/melanoma, breast, gynaecology and colorectal cancer follow up, including timelines for discharge back to the general practitioner across all Western and Central Metropolitan Integrated Cancer Service hospitals.
Researcher/s:	Mr Iain Skinner, Dr Tony Dowling
Collaborative Partners:	Werribee Mercy Hospital, Western and Central Melbourne Integrated Cancer Services

Project Number:	R07/57
Project:	Australian healthcare sector employee satisfaction and wellbeing survey
Researcher/s:	Deakin University
Collaborative Partners:	Deakin University, Mercy Health, RMIT University
Project Number:	R08/07
Project:	Can we predict de-novo stress urinary incontinence following female urethral diverticulectomy?
Researcher/s:	Dr Kobi Stav, Professor Peter L Dwyer
Project Number:	R08/08
Project:	Can we predict failure of mid-urethral sling?
Researcher/s:	Dr Kobi Stav, Professor Peter L Dwyer
Project Number:	R08/09W
Project:	Primary care liaison (PCL) review
Researcher/s:	Dr Sean Jespersen
Project Number:	R08/10
Project:	Preconception counselling and Type 2 diabetes: The diabetes educator's role
Researcher/s:	Ms Jacqueline Free, Professor Susan McDonald
Collaborative Partners:	Mercy Hospital for Women, La Trobe University
Project Number:	R08/11
Project:	Delayed complications of obstetric blockage
Researcher/s:	Dr Andrew Ross, Dr Niamh Hayes
Project Number:	R08/12
Project:	An exploration of premature infant response to recorded music with maternal involvement versus no maternal involvement
Researcher/s:	Ms Trisha Dearn, Andrew Watkins, Dan Casalaz
Collaborative Partners:	Mercy Hospital for Women, Royal Children's Hospital
Project Number:	R08/13
Project:	Bleeding disorders in women with heavy periods
Researcher/s:	Associate Professor Sonia Grover, Dr Melissa Cameron
Collaborative Partners:	Mercy Hospital for Women, Austin Health
Project Number:	R08/14
Project:	Variance in adult bone size originates before birth
Researcher/s:	Professor Ego Seeman, Dr Ashild Bjornerem, Associate Professor Susan Walker
Collaborative Partners:	Mercy Hospital for Women, Austin Health
Project Number:	R08/15
Project:	The incidence of bleeding disorders in women with endometriosis
Researcher/s:	Associate Professor Sonia Grover, Dr Melissa Cameron
Collaborative Partners:	Mercy Hospital for Women, Austin Health
Project Number:	R08/16
Project:	A review of pregnancy assessment day centre admissions
Researcher/s:	Ms Sarah Mitchell, Ms Renee McDowell, Alexis Shub

- Project Number: R08/17  
 Project: Efficacy of a second course of Indomethacin for treatment of patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) in preterm infants  
 Researcher/s: Dr Kai Konig
- Project Number: R08/20W  
 Project: A randomised control trial of Risperdal CONSTA compared to Risperdal CONSTA and collaborative therapy in a naturalistic setting  
 Researcher/s: Ms Monica Gilbert, Ms Gail Carroll  
 Collaborative Partners: Werribee Mercy Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital
- Project Number: R08/21  
 Project: Pathways to internalising versus externalising infant behaviours: Latent variable, longitudinal models of maternal attachment, marital relations, infant attachment and infant adjustment  
 Researcher/s: Professor Rapson, Dr Megan Galbally  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women, Ballarat Maternal and Child Health Centres
- Project Number: R08/22  
 Project: The role of neuropeptides in the regulation of maternal mood and behaviour in the postpartum period  
 Researcher/s: Dr Megan Galbally, Professor Michael Permezel  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women, Centre for Child & Family Studies, Leiden University Royal Melbourne Hospital Department of Psychology, University of Ballarat
- Project Number: R08/23  
 Project: Predictors of pre-eclampsia in diabetes  
 Researcher/s: Dr Alexis Shub, Dr Jenny Huynh  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women, Austin Health
- Project Number: R08/24  
 Project: Purification of human haematopoietic progenitor cells (HPC) from umbilical cord blood to assess HPC targeting with novel bispecific single chain antibodies in vitro and in vivo in an animal model of atherosclerotic disease  
 Researcher/s: Dr Ingo Ahrens, Professor Karlheinz Peter, Dr Martha Lappas  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women, Baker Heart Research Institute
- Project Number: R08/25  
 Project: Leaving expressing: Exploring the views and experiences of midwives regarding why women give expressed milk to their babies  
 Researcher/s: Dr Helen McLachlan, Ms Kerri McEgan  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women, Frances Perry House Royal Women's Hospital, La Trobe University
- Project Number: R08/26C  
 Project: Supporting families to support children with life threatening illness  
 Researcher/s: Dr Katrina McFerran  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Palliative Care, Victorian Paediatric Palliative Care, Royal Children's Hospital

- Project Number: R08/27C  
 Project: Turning policy into practice  
 Researcher/s: Mr Ian Millard  
 Collaborative Partners: North & West Metropolitan Region Palliative Care Consortium, Mercy Palliative Care, Gabrielle Jennings Centre for Palliative Care at Werribee Mercy Hospital
- Project Number: R08/28  
 Project: Comparing patients' perception of the effectiveness of information about laser treatment of cervical dysplasia (precancer) using a multimedia information tool as an adjunct to standard information delivery  
 Researcher/s: Associate Professor Peter Grant
- Project Number: R08/29  
 Project: How do premature babies exposed to opiates in utero withdraw?  
 Researcher/s: Dr Andrew Lovett, Dr Philip Henschke  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women, Royal Women's Hospital, University of Melbourne, Shepparton Campus
- Project Number: R08/31  
 Project: Investigating the link between early pregnancy and obstetric disease  
 Researcher/s: Dr Harry Georgiou, Dr Alexis Shub, Professor Michael Permezel  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women, University of Melbourne, Monash University, Baker Medical Research Institute
- Project Number: R08/32W  
 Project: Implementation of best practice guidelines to improve emergency department pain management  
 Researcher/s: Mr John Stafford
- Project Number: R08/33W  
 Project: The vulnerability to psychosis: Developmental pathways to auditory hallucinations and delusions  
 Researcher/s: Dr John Farhall, Dr Anita Govindan  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Mental Health, La Trobe University, Northern Area Mental Health Services
- Project Number: R08/34W  
 Project: Acceptance and commitment therapy for medication resistant psychosis: A randomised controlled trial  
 Researcher/s: Dr John Farhall, Dr Anita Govindan  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Mental Health, La Trobe University, Southern Health, Melbourne Health (North Western Mental Health), St Vincent's Health
- Project Number: R08/35  
 Project: Effect of vaginal prolapse on lower urinary tract  
 Researcher/s: Associate Professor Peter Dwyer, Dr Joseph Lee
- Project Number: R08/36  
 Project: Do primigravidas have a realistic expectation of an uncomplicated birth?  
 Researcher/s: Dr Karen Williamson
- Project Number: R08/37  
 Project: The effect of BMI on surgical difficulty in laparoscopic gynaecological surgery  
 Researcher/s: Dr Kate McIlwaine



Project Number: R08/38  
 Project: Phase II randomised, double-blind, multicentre study to assess the efficacy of AZD2281 in the treatment of patients with platinum sensitive serous ovarian cancer following treatment with two or more platinum containing regimen (Protocol D810C00019)  
 Researcher/s: Dr Linda Mileshekin  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women, Royal Melbourne Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital, Royal Adelaide Hospital, Burnside War Memorial Hospital

Project Number: R08/39  
 Project: XCEL bladeless trocar versus veress needle: A randomised controlled trial comparing these two entry techniques in gynaecological laparoscopic surgery  
 Researcher/s: Dr Peta Wright  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women, Monash Medical Centre

Project Number: R08/40  
 Project: The use of the ICIQ vaginal symptoms questionnaire (ICIQ VS) to assess the effect of surgical management of vaginal prolapse and urinary incontinence on vaginal symptoms and female sexual function before and after surgery  
 Researcher/s: Associate Professor Peter Dwyer, Dr Joseph Lee

Project Number: R08/41  
 Project: Validation of perineal USS to estimate bladder volumes in females  
 Researcher/s: Associate Professor Peter Dwyer, Dr Joseph Lee

Project Number: R08/42C  
 Project: National standards assessment program pilot  
 Researcher/s: Ms Deanne Layton  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Palliative Care, Palliative Care Australia

Project Number: R08/44  
 Project: Sex specific differences in preterm birth and preterm premature rupture of the membranes in an Australian cohort  
 Researcher/s: Dr Naomi Saunder

Project Number: R08/47  
 Project: A randomised double blind placebo-controlled study of the efficacy and safety of MORAb-003 (farletuzimab) in combination with paclitaxel therapy in subjects with first platinum-resistant or refractory relapsed ovarian cancer  
 Researcher/s: Dr Serena Foo  
 Collaborative Partners: Mercy Hospital for Women; Multicentre, The Royal Women's Hospital; Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital; Westmead Hospital; Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital; Burnside Hospital

Project Number: R08/50W  
 Project: Call back study investigating paediatric dog bite injury cases that occurred in the domestic setting  
 Researcher/s: Ms Karen Ashby, Ms Lynn O'Neill  
 Collaborative Partners: Werribee Mercy Hospital, Monash University, Wodonga Regional Health Service, Maroondah Hospital, Austin Health, Royal Children's Hospital



**Mercy Health**

*Care first*

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