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World-first child health study celebrates one year anniversary with recruitment milestone

News at a Glance:

- A Murdoch Children's Research Institute world-first study tracking the health and wellbeing of Victorians, from birth to old age, has delivered a recruitment milestone of more than 22,000 babies since launching a year ago
- All up, almost 60,000 babies, mothers and fathers have joined [GenV](#), the world's largest-ever birth and parent cohort studies, which is currently recruiting in every birthing hospital across the state. GenV aims to better understand and treat the causes of modern childhood health problems such as obesity, asthma, autism, food allergies and mental illness
- To mark the milestone, the GenV Maternal Vaccine Study secured a \$685,000 State Government grant which will examine data on pregnancy and infant vaccine safety outcomes in the first-year old life for 20,000 mothers and their babies

A world-first study tracking the health and wellbeing of Victorians, from birth to old age, has delivered a recruitment milestone of more than 22,000 babies since launching a year ago.

[Murdoch Children's Research Institute's](#) GenV, the world's largest-ever birth and parent cohort studies, is celebrating its one-year anniversary of being available to families across Victoria. All up, almost 60,000 babies, mothers and fathers have joined the study, which is recruiting in every birthing hospital across the state.

The milestone was marked today at Werribee Mercy Hospital where State Medical Research Minister Jaala Pulford also announced a \$685,000 grant for the GenV Maternal Vaccine Study. The study will examine data on pregnancy and infant vaccine safety outcomes in the first-year old life for 20,000 mothers and their babies.

GenV aims to better understand and treat the causes of modern childhood health problems such as obesity, asthma, autism, food allergies and mental illness.

Launching at Werribee Mercy Hospital in 2021, where more than 500 babies have since enrolled in GenV, was critical to the study's success in Melbourne's west and ensures that new and routinely collected data and blood and saliva samples reflect the diversity of Victorian families and positions GenV as a truly inclusive research project.

GenV's recruitment team has recorded 65 languages (including Auslan) during the opt-in process. More than 4500 families in GenV do not primarily speak English at home.

The research potential of existing collected data and ongoing GenV sample collection is gaining local and international interest and recognition by external collaborators.

Families that sign up to GenV will make a difference to the future health of generations to come. Babies and their parents taking part in this once-in-a-generation research study can help to solve common child and adult health problems.

Every family with a newborn baby is invited to join over a two-year period from October 2021, no matter where they live or what language they speak. Participants can join the program in person during their hospital stay or any time after birth via a simple, guided online process.



GenV is led by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, is supported by the [Royal Children's Hospital](#) and [University of Melbourne](#), and is funded by the [Paul Ramsay Foundation \(PRF\)](#), the [Victorian Government](#) and the [Royal Children's Hospital Foundation](#).

[Visit the GenV website](#) for more information.

Quote attributable to MCRI Director, Professor Kathryn North AC

"This significant milestone of 60,000 participants brings GenV's momentum into clear focus. 12 months ago, we invited our first families to join the program. Next month we celebrate 1 year since GenV state wide scale up and we are now the largest ever consented baby and parent cohort research study undertaken in Australia."

Quotes attributable to MCRI, Group Leader, Vaccine Uptake, Associate Professor Margie Danchin

"The Gen V Maternal Vaccine study is a world-first large scale project that will demonstrate maternal vaccine safety (COVID-19 and influenza vaccines) by examining linked data on pregnancy and infant outcomes in the first-year old life for 20, 000 mother baby pairs."

Many women are concerned about maternal or infant complications after maternal vaccination and remain under-vaccinated and vulnerable. The study aims to maintain the confidence and trust of the Victorian community in COVID-19 and influenza vaccination in pregnancy by detailing the health outcomes for mothers and the longer-term health and developmental outcomes for their infants. Communication of these findings to pregnant women, their families and community and health-care providers will build vaccine confidence and ensure high maternal vaccine uptake, to protect pregnant women and their infants."

Quote attributable to Program Director, Scientific and Cohort Director, Professor Melissa Wake

"By 2035, GenV's vision is to have helped solve complex issues facing our children and adults now and tomorrow. At this 60,000 participant milestone, we are on track to reach a robust recruitment figure by 2023 enabling research into common and uncommon conditions facing children and adults today and to span wellness through illness."

Quote attributable to Deputy Director, Equity and Knowledge Translation, Professor, Sharon Goldfeld

"Babies and families everywhere across Victoria are taking part in GenV. Families in Melbourne, families in regional Victoria, and families from diverse language backgrounds are participating in GenV helping us make sure we really are an inclusive research project."

Quote attributable to GenV Participant, Emily Raval, Mother of Rowan, Born at Mercy Werribee in February 2022

"Research like GenV is important because it's a way our family can help other babies and families across Australia and for those babies to help us too. GenV is creating a "research village" filled with parents we may never meet, but who will help us protect and learn about our baby and

future generations.”

Quotes attributable to Professor Jason Payne, Chief Executive Health Services, Mercy Health,

“Mercy Health is proud to be part of such exciting research which will comprehensively track the health and wellbeing of a generation of Victorians, from infancy to old age.”

“The enlistment and input of our staff and patients at Mercy Hospital for Women and Werribee Mercy Hospital will help to make predictions, find solutions and treatments for health-related problems for children and the adults they will become.”

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