

# The Triple B Study:

## Bumps, Babies and Beyond

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The Triple B Study Newsletter  
University of New South Wales  
Curtin University



### To all our participating families,

I am delighted to write to you in our first newsletter to the families participating in the Triple B Study. This is a wonderful opportunity for me to thank you for being involved in the study. We appreciate all the time you have dedicated and the enthusiasm you have shown for the research being conducted. We believe that the study is of tremendous importance and your contribution is greatly valued.

We now have around 300 families on board, and are meeting lots of beautiful young babies at the moment, with many more due over the coming months. It is a unique and special opportunity for us to be part of this amazing time of change and development. For those of you with

young babies, and for expecting mothers and partners, we wish you all good health at this important time, and hope for the safe arrival of your new little ones into the world.

Sixty-four of our original pilot study families have now completed their age one follow-up which has been an amazing process to be part of. As a mother of two little ones myself (Audrey three and Oscar 18 months), seeing your babies grow and develop and identifying the factors that best assist this process is especially meaningful to me.

I would also like to tell you about the development of our next follow-up at age three. We have recently developed the research methods and are now awaiting ethics approval to start a pilot study later this year. For a small group

of you with children around age three, we hope to be in touch soon to invite you to be involved. This follow-up will consist of mother and partner interviews and questionnaires, and further gold-standard assessments of children's health and development, including a complimentary follow-up with the Bayleys Scales of Infant Development and written feedback about your child. We are seeking larger-scale funding to support this work at present and very much hope that we will be able to offer the opportunity to be involved to all our families in the future.

Wishing you all the very best over the festive season,

Dr Delyse Hutchinson

Child Developmental Clinical Psychologist and  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow



### Contact us!

If you have any queries or comments, or would like any further information then please do not hesitate to contact us.

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## Progress to date..

The main objective of the Triple B Study is to investigate the impact of factors such as parental substance use, diet and nutrition, psychological health and social support on infant development and family functioning. Being the first large scale Australian study to comprehensively examine these issues in pregnant women and partners, we hope to improve knowledge of these effects to direct public health and treatment initiatives that improve the health and well being of Australian children and families.

The research project started as a pilot study of 72 families recruited through Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH) in 2009. Of these 72 families, 64 have now finished, with their babies reaching 12 months of age. We have another 3 who will finish by the end of the year. We would like to extend a big thank you to these families for allowing us into their busy lives to share their experiences during their babies' first year of life.

Preliminary results from the pilot study showed a number of significant findings. The mean age of our sample was 33 years with the majority of participants completing year 12. The sample was further defined by a high percentage of our participants being married or living in de facto relationships (94 per cent) while 21 per cent were unemployed (this included home duties). Results show that a vast majority (80 per cent) of pregnancies were planned, with nearly half of the sample reporting they had previously given birth to another child. Preliminary results also revealed that the most common problem women experienced during pregnancy was severe vomiting, nausea or dehydration.

The sample scores for depression, anxiety and stress were within the normal range, as were scores pertaining to physical and mental health, however, a small minority (11%) reported experiencing antenatal depression.

In terms of substance use, 49 per cent of the sample used alcohol in the month preceding baseline interview (conducted during pregnancy), while 4 per cent reported nicotine use. There was no reported use of heroin, benzodiazepines or cannabis.

Please note that these are only very preliminary data so stay tuned in the New Year for more information on published results and papers.

## Meet the team

### Chief Investigators

**Professor Richard Mattick**  
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**Professor Steve Allsop**  
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**Professor Jake Najman**  
Director at the Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research and Education Centre, University of Queensland

**Professor Elizabeth Elliot**  
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## A message from Elizabeth...



As many of you are probably already aware, at the end of 2009 I left NDARC and the pilot study I had been co-ordinating to take up an opportunity within the School of Psychiatry to work on a large population-level data linkage project examining child health and development. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the many participants who allowed me into their lives (and their homes) to share their experiences during pregnancy and the early weeks with their new baby. Thank you for your openness in sharing personal details of your life, and your generosity in devoting the time required to complete the various interviews – this made my job a lot easier. I thoroughly enjoyed initially interviewing the many mothers and partners we recruited, catching up with them at the various follow-ups, and it was always a delight to finally meet the new babies. I wish you the very best for the years ahead.

## The main study...

In January 2010, we were fortunate to receive funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to expand the pilot study into a much larger cohort study of around 1,800 families in Sydney and Perth. In addition to following up our fabulous pilot study families as their (your!) babies turned one year old, we have also been busy setting up the new project, with a number of new staff coming on board.

Over the coming 2-3 years, we hope to recruit around 1,800 families. So far, 300 families have generously donated their time and effort. These families have been recruited into the study from the Royal Hospital for Women in Randwick and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Camperdown, and we will soon begin recruitment at Liverpool Hospital in Sydney and King Edward Memorial Hospital in Perth.



## Having another Baby?

We would like to invite growing families who have already participated in the study to do so again. If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant over the next two years and also planning to give birth at any of the above hospitals, please get in touch with the study team for another chance to participate! We would also love to hear from any friends or family members who are pregnant and planning to give birth at one of these hospitals.