



# GP News

## Connecting healthcare for the benefit of patients

### Medical research grant a win for women



**An effective treatment for a common yet poorly treated disease that has a cascading impact on women's health may be on the horizon, thanks to a Victorian Government medical research grant.**

The Royal Women's Hospital, the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre and Metrodora Therapeutics were this month awarded a Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund grant, one of just four proposals to win a Tier 2 award.

The grant will fund a project to evaluate the use of a non-antibiotic product to treat women with bacterial vaginosis (BV), a condition that affects about 1 in 10 Australian women and that has proven to be very hard to treat.

BV is an imbalance of bacteria in the vagina and is associated with pelvic infection. In women who are pregnant, it can increase the risk of premature delivery, miscarriage and low birth weight. Current treatment options have limited effects and even after treatment, about half of the women with BV will get the condition back within six to 12 months.

[Read more on the Women's website.](#)

## Changes to maternity referrals

As many of you know, the Women's accepts referrals for women with a low-risk pregnancy if our hospital is the closest maternity hospital to their home address and women requiring complex pregnancy care, if we are the closest tertiary maternity hospital.

As some of our clinics operate as mixed MBS and non-MBS-billed outpatient clinics, we require referrals to be addressed to a named medical practitioner at the Women's.

### **Please address all maternity referrals to Dr Len Matthews.**

This will assist us to run our clinics more efficiently and provide patients with a choice of being treated as either a private or public patient.

When sending a referral, please:

- fax referrals to (03) 8345 3036 (for both Parkville and Sandringham)
- address your referral to "Dr Len Matthews"
- state your practice details and provider number
- include woman's BMI and medical history to enable accurate triage

For further information about referrals please refer to [the Royal Women's Hospital Referrals webpages](#).



## Flu vaccine in pregnancy

Providing the influenza vaccine to women during pregnancy is the best way to protect a baby from flu in the first six months of life.

Pregnant women who get the flu are at higher risk of hospitalisation and even death. Severe illness during pregnancy can also be dangerous for the developing baby because it increases the chance of significant problems, such as premature labour and delivery. Vaccination also provides the newborn with some protection against the flu.

The vaccine is safe and there is no evidence of an increased risk of problems for women or their babies when the vaccine is administered during pregnancy. [The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists \(RANZCOG\)](#) strongly recommends influenza vaccination for pregnant women to protect both the mother and baby.

The Women's recommends routine vaccination of all pregnant women.

The influenza vaccine:

- can be given at any time during pregnancy
- can be given at the same time as pertussis-containing vaccine (recommended at 28-32 weeks, but can be given at any time until delivery)
- is free for pregnant women as part of the National Immunisation Program.

[A brochure on the influenza vaccine and pregnancy](#) is available for women on the Australia Government Department of Health website.

## Continuing professional development

- **Short course on Contemporary Gynaecology**

Agora Medical Education and Frances Perry House is providing a comprehensive update on women's health issues for general practitioners. The course will explore specific women's health conditions such as contraception, menopause, endometriosis, and pelvic organ prolapse, counselling skills on new therapeutic modalities, management strategies and referral pathways.

[For more information see the course flyer](#)

- **Intrauterine device insertion course for general practitioners**

Agora Medical Education is offering a short, interactive course for GPs wanting a theoretical and practical guide to intrauterine device insertion. The course includes case studies, patient counselling, and practical sessions.

[For more information see the course flyer](#)

- **I Feel Wet: Urogynaecology Unplugged**

Monash University is presenting a short course for health professionals, including GPs, interested in urogynaecology or female urology. The course will cover pelvic mesh, stress urinary incontinence and more.

[For more information see the course website](#)

- **Hepatitis B and HIV Section 100 Prescriber Accreditation Courses**

The Victorian HIV and Hepatitis Integrated Training and Learning Program (VHHITAL) facilitates the Victorian Accreditation program for GPs to become accredited Section 100 Prescribers for both Hepatitis B and HIV. VHHITAL runs around two weekend courses each year, in both HIV and HBV. The courses are held at the North Western Melbourne PHN in Parkville. Currently three weekend sessions are booked for the coming months:

- two HBV s100 (one day) courses
- one HIV s100 course (two days)

These nationally accredited courses are RACGP CAT 1 accredited, with the successful completion earning 40x CAT 1 Points. The courses are funded by the DHHS for Victorian based GPS to attend free of charge.

If you are interested in attending one of these courses, you can email [Allison Burgess](mailto:Allison.Burgess@vhhital.org.au), Acting Manager of the VHHITAL Program, or phone her on or (03) 9347 1188.

## Research participation

### Reproductive coercion

The University of Melbourne is undertaking a research project exploring GP's experiences responding to reproductive coercion.

Reproductive coercion refers to a group of behaviours that intend to interfere with the autonomy of a person, usually a woman, to make decisions about their reproductive health. Contraceptive sabotage, pregnancy coercion and controlling the outcome of a pregnancy are all forms of reproductive coercion and often occur alongside other forms of abuse in a relationship.

This research is aiming to understand how primary care clinicians identify and respond to this type of abuse.

The University of Melbourne is looking for shared maternity care GPs to participate in a confidential interview (either by telephone or face to face) with a researcher. Interviews take approximately 20 minutes and all interview data will be de-identified.

To register your interest in the project or to gain more information about the project please contact [Molly Wellington](mailto:Molly.Wellington@unimelb.edu.au) at the University of Melbourne.

### Elective Oocyte Cryopreservation

The University of Melbourne is conducting a survey to clarify perceptions, practices and the current level of understanding that General Practitioners have of elective oocyte cryopreservation (or egg freezing). The study also aims to determine if further resources are required for GPs.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. Participants will be provided with immediate feedback on their answers to questions about their knowledge of oocyte cryopreservation. Please see the following links:

- [Participate in the survey](#)
- [Ask to be informed of results](#)

## Contact

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Fast Fax Referral: fax: 8345 3036

GP Quick Access Number ph: 8345 2058  
The Women's Switchboard ph: 8345 2000

The Women's Abortion and Contraception service  
professional line (03) 8345 3061 (not for use by  
women needing the service).

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the women's  
the royal women's hospital  
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