

The Long Term Consequences of Assisted Reproduction on Development of the Offspring: A Prospective Cohort Study – ‘Growing up Healthy Study’

Research overview

In Australia 1 in 25 children are born resulting from in-vitro fertilisation (IVF). Short term follow-up of these children has been well documented; however there is very limited information about the health of these children as they grow up. The Growing Up Healthy Study therefore aims to determine the long-term consequences of assisted reproduction upon the development of the offspring by comparing their growth, metabolic, respiratory, psychological, immunological and reproductive development with The Western Australian Pregnancy Cohort (Raine) Study cohort. Teenagers involved in the study are invited to visit our research team between the ages of 13 and 22 at one of the University of Western Australia’s research facilities to participate in the same age-specific assessments that the Raine cohort underwent. The comparisons between the Growing Up Healthy cohort and Raine Cohort will hopefully provide the answers we need to identify any long-term consequences of IVF.

Research highlights

Growing Up Healthy Study participants between the ages of 18-21 are now invited to take part in an exciting comparative sub-study investigating how our bodies react to stress – the Challenge Me Study. It is very important to study stress hormones as they play a role in many conditions ranging from heart disease to depression and anxiety. By studying how stress hormones contribute to the cause of these conditions we may be able to then increase resilience and improve health outcomes for people at risk of the development of these diseases in adult life. Furthermore it will help identify whether any differences exist between the stress responses of children born through IVF compared with a reference population (the Raine cohort).

Participants are invited to visit our research team at the Women and Infants Research Foundation, for a single appointment to measure their peak and decline in stress hormone levels in response to two short tasks. These tasks consist of a psychological ‘challenge’ that teenagers would encounter in their everyday life. Unfortunately we can’t reveal any more details; to get a true stress response we need to keep the ‘challenges’ a surprise. Intriguing, isn’t it?



Research achievements

Over 330 families from all across Western Australia are currently involved in the research study. We have received an excellent response from these families expressing their interest in the research and willingness to volunteer their time to attend the study assessments.

If you would like to know more the Growing Up Heathy Study or Challenge Me sub-study or to participate in any one of the follow-ups, please contact the research team.

T: 9340 1443
M: 0439 266 434
guhstudy-swih@uwa.edu.au



THE TEAM

Chief Investigators

**School of Women's and Infants' Health,
The University of Western Australia**
Prof Roger Hart MD FRANZCOG, FRCOG, CREI
Assoc/Prof Craig Pennell PhD FRANZCOG
Prof (Adj) Dorota Doherty PhD

Telethon Kids Institute, The University of Western Australia

Dr Monique Robinson PhD

School of Paediatrics and Reproductive Health, The University of Adelaide

Prof Robert Norman FRANZCOG, FRCPA, FRCPath,
FRCOG, CREI

Research Coordinators

Dr Rhiannon Halse PhD
Tina Ludlow-Hoyer RN RM