

Miscarriage discovery

Hormone gives women hope

Thousands more babies could be born each year if women with a history of miscarriages are given a hormone, experts say.

They want progesterone to be given twice a day to women who bleed early in pregnancy.

Progesterone is naturally secreted by the ovaries and placenta in early pregnancy and is vital for a healthy baby.

Between 20 and 25 per cent of pregnancies end in a miscarriage, having a major clinical and psychological impact on women and their families.

A study in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology examines the findings of two trials, Promise and Prism.

Promise studied 836 women with unexplained recurrent miscarriages at 45 hospitals in Britain and the Netherlands, and found a 3 per cent higher live birth rate with progesterone.

Prism studied 4153 women with early pregnancy bleeding at 48 hospitals in Britain. It found that giving progesterone resulted in a 5 per cent increase in the number of babies born to those who had one or more

miscarriages. The benefit was even greater for women with three or more miscarriages, with a 15 per cent increase in the live birth rate.

A second study, in the obstetrics journal BJOG, found that the Prism trial indicated progesterone was cost-effective, costing on average £200 (\$390) per pregnancy.

Experts from the University of Birmingham and Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage suggest in the UK the drug would result in 8450 more babies being born each year.

Dr Adam Devall, senior clinical trial fellow at the University of Birmingham and manager of the Tommy's research centre, said: "The dual risk factors of early pregnancy bleeding and a history of miscarriages identify high risk women in whom progesterone is of benefit."

Dr Pat O'Brien, vice-president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, said: "This treatment offers an increased chance of a successful birth and appears to be cost effective for the NHS, so we hope Nice will consider this important research in their next update of the guidance."

John Newnham has dedicated his life to keeping babies safe and well

PROFESSOR DELIVERS BIRTH OF NEW ERA

KATE EMERY

The newly crowned Senior Australian of the Year believes every woman has an important right that she probably does not even know about.

That right is to know the length of their cervix in mid-pregnancy, which can be crucial in warning about preterm births.

And as the country's leading maternal foetal medicine specialist, Perth's Professor John Newnham, pictured above, wants to deliver more babies alive and well into their parents' arms.

"The Americans' second amendment is the right to bear arms, our second amendment (should) be: it is the right for every Australian

woman to know the length of her cervix in mid-pregnancy," he said.

Professor Newnham's birth certificate would tell the world he is 67 but by his reckoning it should be closer to 68.

He is fond of the South Korean system, where babies turn one on the day of their birth because of the value it places on the nine months spent in the womb — which, he said, was far more important to a baby's wellbeing than our culture would have us believe.

"When I was a medical student I became fascinated by life before birth," he said. "I thought I'd found an undiscovered continent

and I've spent my life exploring it."

Among his long list of achievements, Professor



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Department of **Justice**

Magistrates

Salary: Salary: \$327,484 pa plus a fully maintained motor vehicle.

Expressions of interest in appointment to the above positions is invited from persons who have had at least 5 years' legal experience, as defined in Clause 2 Schedule 1 of the *Magistrates Court Act 2004*.

Duties: To preside over the Magistrates Court as directed by the Chief Magistrate from time to time and to perform such other duties and functions as may be assigned to them by the Chief Magistrate.

Location: There are two positions presently available. Successful candidates for these positions will undergo a period of induction at the Central Law Courts. They will then be posted to a regional location. Subsidised housing is available in most regional locations. Magistrates posted to a regional location will not remain in that location indefinitely, but will be expected to serve there for 3 to 5 years, before being considered to transfer to the metropolitan area or another location, subject to a suitable vacancy being available at that time.

Commencement: It is proposed the appointments will commence in March or April 2020.

Criteria for appointment: Applicants should possess the qualifications, experience and qualities required for appointment as a Magistrate, and should address the following criteria in their application: Relevant knowledge and experience of the law, practice and procedure; Demonstrated competence, skill, impartiality and temperament; Integrity and good character; Case management skills and ability to manage a large list of cases each day; an understanding of the dynamics of Family and Domestic Violence; A demonstrated level of Aboriginal cultural competency; Demonstrated experience in working with people from disadvantaged backgrounds; Demonstrated experience in management and administration; Demonstrated experience in the use of technology; Capacity to introduce and manage change; and Ability to take an effective leadership and educational role in the community. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people with diverse legal experience are encouraged to apply.

Further information: Particulars of entitlements such as leave, superannuation and other conditions of service are available on inquiry to Michael Johnson, Director, Magistrates Court and Tribunals, Department of Justice, on (08) 9425 2770 or michael.johnson@justice.wa.gov.au

Applications: In addition to addressing the selection criteria in their applications, applicants should include a CV setting out their personal particulars, qualifications, legal experience, employment history and contact details (including email address) and provide proof of their date of birth and contact details for two referees. Short-listed applicants will be required to complete a Personal Information Declaration.

Persons who do not respond to this advertisement may be considered for this appointment.

Closing date: Applications must be received by 5.00 pm 14 February 2020.

Applications marked 'Appointments in Confidence' should be sent by email to solgen@sg.wa.gov.au or hand delivered to:

Solicitor-General
Solicitor-General's Office
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28 Barrack Street
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Email: solgen@sg.wa.gov.au

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I've made it clear what I'm doing this year and that's staring at the Prime Minister and saying: 'It is time for preventing preterm birth to become a national priority.'



Picture: Michael Wilson

Newnham, pictured left in with twins in 2003, has made it standard in WA for ultrasound technicians to measure a pregnant women's cervix.

"I've said this to many women: it is the right to know the length of your cervix and it's a big risk factor and we can fix it," he told The Weekend West in his office at King Edward Memorial Hospital.

"It is your right, do not get off that bed until the sonographer has told you your cervix is long enough."

More than 3200 babies in WA and 26,000 nationally are born prematurely every year.

For some of those babies, the day they are born is the day they die. Others may go on to suffer health problems such as cerebral palsy, chronic lung disease and developmental delays.

But there are encouraging signs things do not have to be this way.

In 2014, a program developed by Professor Newnham and his team led to an 8 per cent fall in premature births across the State.

In 2018, he founded the Australian Preterm Birth Preven-

tion Alliance and in 2020 he hopes to use the platform afforded him by the Australian of the Year awards to roll that program out across Australia.

"I've made it very clear what I'm doing this year and that's staring straight at the Prime Minister and saying: 'It is time for preventing preterm birth to become a national priority for Australia,'" he said.

"My aim by the end of this year is that the alliance, instead of being just up and running, is totally vibrant so that the women and families of Australia know all about this. My career goal is to lower the rate of preterm births in Australia, which no nation has ever done."

One possible source of ammunition in the fight to reduce premature births is a study being run by the Women and Infants Research Foundation, of which Professor Newnham is chief scientific director.

It will investigate whether the presence of specific bacteria in a woman's vagina during pregnancy could be a red flag to identify and treat those at risk of delivering early.

"If this works it would revolutionise antenatal care," he said.

Girl accused of stabbing mum

A teenager has been charged after allegedly stabbing her mother with a pair of scissors.

According to police, the 15-year-old refused to take medication when asked by her mother at their North Beach home.

The teenager allegedly punched her mother on the cheek and tried to stab her with a pair of kitchen scissors.

The mother's forearm was injured as she held her arms up to defend herself before running to

her bedroom. She reportedly called out to her daughter for help but was allegedly stabbed again in the upper arm.

Police were later called after the girl was seen allegedly scratching insults into a car parked on North Beach Road in Karrinyup.

She was arrested and faced Perth Children's Court this week charged with aggravated unlawful wounding and property damage.

The girl was released on bail and will next face court on Tuesday.

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