

Preterm Birth Prevention Research

In November 2014, WIRF launched the Western Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative with the single aim of safely lowering the rate of early birth in our state. Since then, the program has gone from strength to strength.

The Initiative has three principal components.

First, is a state-wide outreach program ensuring the health care workforce and general public understand the new clinical guidelines that have been put in place. This outreach program has included print media and workshops conducted in hospitals and health care centres. During 2015, the outreach team led by Professor John Newnham, travelled more than 13,000 kms and provided in-service education to more than 500 health care workers in their own work environments. The success of the outreach trips has been remarkable and we expect that further development of this interactive education program will continue to be a priority of WIRF in the future years.

Second, is a public health campaign, known as thewholeninemonths.com.au. The name is trademarked by WIRF. We are very grateful to The West Australian Newspapers for support, some of which has come from WIRF's successful contribution to the Orange Seed Competition that has provided opportunities for the Initiative to be promoted in print and social media.



Third, is the development of a dedicated Preterm Birth Prevention Clinic at KEMH, designed to provide investigation and management for women at highest risk of this complication of pregnancy. For the first 18 months this service was funded by special block grants awarded by The Minister of Health, but ongoing support is now assured by inclusion of this service within the Hospital budget.

The results of the first 12 months of the Initiative, both state-wide and within KEMH, are now being analysed and are expected to be available in late 2016/early 2017.

1 in 12 babies is born
preterm in WA

Discovering how to prevent preterm birth, and implementing the strategies across Western Australia, has been an enduring focus for WIRF researchers for the last two decades. This is a field in which our researchers have been very productive and for which WIRF is well acknowledged, both locally and internationally. Western Australia, as a location, is ideal for this program, being a relatively isolated medical community but with excellent health care resources and computerisation of outcomes.

As for many areas of research, our greatest contribution will come from focussing on those areas in which we have a particular strength, and contributing to the global effort of preterm birth prevention is definitely one of them.

WIRF's principal partners in the Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative include the Health Department of Western Australia, The University of Western Australia, the Australian Medical Association and the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

The Western Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative

THEWHOLENINEMONTHS.com.au



L-R: Barney McCallum (Obstetrician, Kalgoorlie), Michelle Pedretti, Suzie Allen, Dr Suzanne Meharry and Prof John Newnham at the Kalgoorlie outreach event

RESEARCH REPORTS ONLINE

Individual research reports are available online at www.wirf.com.au/research for the following Preterm Birth Prevention studies:

- The Western Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative
- Exploring the Genetics of Preterm Birth in Western Australian Families
- Development of a Multi-locus Sequence Typing Scheme for *Ureaplasma Parvum* and *Ureaplasma Urealyticum*
- Prevalence of *Ureaplasma* and *Candida spp.* during pregnancy in WA women
- TAK1 Inhibition for the Prevention of Inflammation-induced Preterm Birth
- Predicting Infection-related risk of Preterm Birth
- Characterising T cell responses to *Ureaplasma spp* in pregnancy
- Predict1000 (Prevention of infection-driven preterm birth through development of a universal diagnostic test to identify high-risk pregnancies)
- Western Australia Pregnancy Biobank for High Risk Pregnancies
- Microbial biomarkers of preterm birth