

Western Australian Biobank (WAPB) for High Risk Pregnancies

Research overview

The Western Australian Biobank (WAPB) project was funded by a grant from Channel 7 Telethon Trust to establish a repository of biological samples and associated clinical data from pregnancies at high risk of preterm delivery and related complications. Once completed, the Biobank will be an invaluable database used to assist researchers – both local and external – to expand knowledge and understanding of the causes of preterm birth, its prediction and effective treatment.

The WAPB has a documented governance structure and its activities are monitored by an Independent Oversight Committee; the composition and terms of reference of which has been established. Ethics approval for the project was received in July 2015. Full details of the Biobank mission, structure, sample collection protocols and application processes can be found on the WA Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative website: www.thewholeninemonths.com.au/biobank/

Research highlights

The majority of samples for the Biobank will be collected from women attending the KEMH Preterm Birth Prevention Clinic. The Biobank's two research midwives, Hannah Smith and Jenni Leverington, are working closely with the Clinic's administration and clinical staff to integrate the Biobank's collection protocol and activities seamlessly into the routine functioning of the clinic. Two databases have been devised to record participants' details and pregnancy history at the time of recruitment and their pregnancy outcome data after delivery. After the first month of operation, 30 participants were recruited into the study with none having delivered.

The Biobank will continue to recruit and collect samples for at least five years. It is envisaged that around 1000 pregnancies (mothers, fathers and babies) will be included in the biobank. The sample collection protocols and procedures have been designed to harmonise with the GAPPS Repository; an international initiative aimed at establishing a world-wide network of pregnancy biobanks that will allow pooling of samples from multiple communities and thereby provide a global resource for research into pregnancy disorders.



THE TEAM

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