MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 16th June 2010

An Insight into Pregnant Women’s Views on Vaccinations

Researchers from the Kids Research Institute at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead are to embark on an Australian-first study to examine women’s attitudes towards vaccination during pregnancy.

Following a successful Financial Markets Foundation for Children grant application, the research team* will commence the two year study in July 2010, looking at what pregnant women think about receiving the influenza vaccination during pregnancy. Importantly, the second phase of the project will involve using the data collected to develop an educational tool to help women make informed decisions about vaccination.

“It is exciting to think that for the first time in Australia we may have a comprehensive profile of pregnant women’s views and actions on vaccination,” said Dr Julie Leask the study's chief investigator and specialist in immunisation behaviour.

“Influenza vaccination is recommended for Australian women in pregnancy but we know that uptake rates are low. Getting a more precise picture of how many pregnant women receive the influenza vaccine, and the reasons why many don’t, will help us to address the barriers.”

The investigators are particularly interested in exploring the concerns pregnant women have about vaccination.

“Pregnancy is a time when women are women are told to avoid certain foods, medicines and other things. Hence, some might be wary of having a vaccine. Understanding the nature of their concerns will ultimately help us to develop an information tool for women to weigh up the risks and benefits of influenza vaccination.”

The project will run over a two year period, surveying women in metropolitan Sydney and a regional NSW location.

*The investigators on the study will be Dr Julie Leask, Senior Research Fellow1 PhD and MPH (USYD), Midwifery Cert., Dip App Sci Nursing (UTS); Dr Spring Cooper, Senior Research Officer1 PhD and Dr Nicholas Wood, Senior Clinical Research Fellow1 BSc(Med), MB,BS(Hons II), FRACP, PhD.

Kids Research Institute is the research arm of The Children’s Hospital at Westmead, the largest paediatric centre in NSW, providing the most advanced care and treatment options for children from NSW, Australia and across the Pacific Rim.

Established in 1880, The Children’s Hospital at Westmead is a stand-alone public Hospital and registered charity with 3,000 staff working in 150 departments. Over 60,000 sick children and their families are cared for each year in a family-focused, healing environment.

Funded by the NSW Government, The Children’s Hospital at Westmead provides significant enhancements to services aided by the generosity of individual and corporate donors. For more information visit www.chw.edu.au

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