
This is the published version.

©2014, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

Reprinted by Deakin University with permission of the Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation.

Available from Deakin Research Online:

[http://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30080113](http://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30080113)
Perinatal mental health education for midwives in Victoria

By Kay McCauley, Maureen Miles, Cheryle Moss, Wendy Cross, Dr Rosalind Lau, Jakqui Barnfield and Louise Newman

Perinatal mental health issues affect women and their families worldwide. Midwives can make a difference to women and families’ lives with early and prompt detection of perinatal mental health issues. To achieve improvements in the delivery of perinatal mental health care, training for midwives working in maternity settings was identified as critical. The Department of Health Victoria funded the development of perinatal mental health education programs for midwives. These comprised of

1. an introductory e-learning perinatal education package, and
2. a more in-depth face to face advanced perinatal mental health education program.

The online e-learning program is available for all midwives across the country. Launched in May 2013 it has currently been accessed by 270 midwives in three different states and internationally, with positive feedback received. In the words of one midwife who has completed the program: “It needs to be a mandatory topic in midwifery education”. The e-learning perinatal mental health education program is available via: perinatal.med.monash.edu.au

The advanced perinatal mental health education program consisted of pre-learning materials, six half-day modules and workshops, and optional post-learning activities. The six modules were offered across consecutive days, and these were repeated on five occasions around Victoria during 2012-13. Modules covered in the advanced perinatal mental health program included:

- role and function of perinatal service system elements;
- perinatal mental health conditions;
- managing women with a history of mental illness;
- medication for mental health conditions during the perinatal period;
- advanced communication skills;
- mentoring and reflective practice.

Midwives who completed the modules have reported increased confidence, knowledge and skills.

Kay McCauley, Maureen Miles; Cheryle Moss; Wendy Cross; Dr Rosalind Lau are all located in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Monash University, Victoria

Jakqui Barnfield is located at Monash Health and the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Monash University, Victoria

Louise Newman is located in the Centre for Developmental Psychiatry & Psychology at Monash University, Victoria

Male semen crucial in shaping health of offspring

University of Adelaide researchers have discovered seminal fluid particularly affects the developmental stages of sons, which in turn affects the chances of developing obesity, diabetes and other metabolic health conditions.

“Launched in May 2013 it has currently been accessed by 270 midwives in three different states and internationally, with positive feedback.”

While seminal fluid is critical in determining whether or not a couple is able to conceive a child, researchers have now discovered that the fluid itself, not just the sperm, influences a range of developmental stages of the offspring.

University of Adelaide researchers have discovered seminal fluid particularly affects the developmental stages of sons, which in turn affects the chances of developing obesity, diabetes and other metabolic health conditions.

“We’ve discovered that it’s not just the sperm but the entire composition of the seminal fluid which has an important role to play in establishing the offspring’s future health, and this is most notably seen in male offspring. If the seminal fluid is of poor quality it affects the female’s capacity to support an embryo. If the embryo manages to survive despite the poor quality seminal fluid, the metabolism of the resulting foetus will be permanently altered, making it more likely to develop a syndrome of metabolic disorders including obesity, high blood pressure and glucose intolerance after birth,” said research lead Professor Sarah Robertson.

Professor Robertson said this new understanding of the role of seminal fluid could lead to better advice and new options for infertile couples. “It’s clear to us now that the seminal fluid produces signals to the embryo absolutely needs for the best possible start to life. Assisted reproductive techniques, as good as they are today, cannot currently replicate such complexity. Therefore, it’s helpful if we can find ways to encourage couples to take care of their reproductive health, including men as well as women.”