



NICS- HCF FOUNDATION FELLOW 2007

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Implementation Project:

Promoting periconceptual folate supplementation in general practice in order to reduce neural tube defects

Despite evidence that folate supplementation can prevent 70 per cent of all cases of neural tube defects like spina bifida, less than 50 per cent of women take folate prior to and during the first three months of pregnancy (periconceptual period). This project will include research with general practitioners and women to identify barriers to improve the delivery and uptake of periconceptual care, including the increase of folate supplementation. The findings will be applied to improving maternal and neonatal outcomes.

Implementation Project Progress Report, October 2007:

Following ethics approval for the project Dr Mazza established an expert advisory group with representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, the Victorian Health Department, the Spina Bifida Foundation, the Birth Defects register and consumers as well as academics with an interest in folate and in guideline implementation.

Dr Mazza is currently facilitating focus groups of GPs and women about the barriers to folate use and the delivery of preconception care. The groups have been informative and will be useful in developing the intervention to assist implementation of the RACGP guidelines on preconception care.

A major breakthrough in the project and Dr Mazza's ability to implement evidence in the general practice setting with regards folate supplementation has been her election to the RACGP National Standing Committee on Quality Care. Dr Mazza is on the steering committee to revise the "Red Book" of pre-emptive care guidelines for GPs in Australia and the preconception care guidelines themselves. She is therefore well placed to be able to implement an "implementation" agenda through this committee.



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Implementation Project Progress Report, April 2008:

As a result of focus group analysis, barriers and enablers for the delivery and uptake of preconception care have been determined, and recommendations identified. In order to address the identified barriers, two intervention materials have been developed (GP waiting room poster, and a preconception health care checklist). Detailed feedback on the project materials and barrier analysis has been sought from focus group participants and advisory group members. The project is currently completing pilot testing of these intervention materials with five GPs.

The recruitment of GPs to conduct the intervention is underway, with GPs displaying a high level of interest. Data collection tools for the intervention phase are currently being designed.

Dr Mazza's involvement on the steering group of the revision of the "Red Book" continues to enhance her ability to implement evidence into the general practice setting.

Implementation Project Progress Report, October 2008:

The project is going well is scheduled for completion within the fellowship deadline. As a result of focus group feedback, the identified barriers and enablers have been categorised according to most important barrier/s and the one/s most open to change. The resources that have been developed as a result of this barrier analyses predominately focus on the barriers most open to change and include a preconception health care checklist, waiting room posters advertising preconception care consultations, patient information sheets, and the development of a preconception health website that is targeted at both GPs and consumers. The website link is - (<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/general-practice/preconception/>)

10 GPs have been recruited to participate in the intervention and the project is currently completing the intervention phase.

Two abstracts were presented at the WONCA/RACGP regional conference held in October 2008. These were:

- Barriers to the delivery and uptake of preconception care: what is important and what is changeable?
- Development of an intervention to improve the delivery of preconception care

Two presentations were delivered at the GP&PHC conference held in June 2008. These were:

- Improving the uptake of periconceptual folate supplementation: what do women think? (Poster)
- An analysis of the barriers and enablers to preconception care using constructs formulated to assist in implementation of evidence based practice (Paper)

I was also able to conduct a workshop at the WONCA/RACGP regional 2008 conference entitled 'Knowledge translation in primary care' with 24 participants. This workshop addressed components of the "knowledge to action" process which involves adaptation of knowledge tools such as guidelines to local contexts, assessment of barriers to practice change, development of interventions and evaluation of implementation of these interventions. Examples of current research and policy were also discussed.

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NICS Mentor:

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Key Presentations:

Mazza D. An analysis of the barriers and enablers to preconception care using constructs formulated to assist in implementation of evidence based practice [presentation]. General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference. Hobart TAS; 2008.

Mazza D, Chapman A. Improving the uptake of periconceptual folate supplementation: What do women think? [Poster]. General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference. Hobart TAS; 2008.

Mazza D. Preconception care: Is it worthwhile and is it happening? WONCA World Conference. Singapore; 2007.

Mazza D. Assisting women to make informed decisions about current and future fertility: Can general practitioners help? General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference. Sydney; 2007.

Mazza D. Preconception care: Is it worthwhile and is it happening? [poster]. General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference. Sydney; 2007.