



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

8 August 2018

\$18 million for medical research to improve women's health

An \$18 million investment by the Turnbull Government in a range of medical research projects will aim to improve the health of Australian women, marking the first step towards a new National Women's Health Strategy.

The National Women's Health Strategy 2020 - 2030, aims to improve the health and wellbeing of all women in Australia over the next decade, especially those at the greatest risk of poor health.

The Strategy is the first since 2010 and is expected to be completed in 2019.

It will identify what is required to improve health outcomes for women and girls and provide a framework for action.

Women experience health challenges differently to men and we need to ensure that this is reflected in our health system.

Maternal and infant health, chronic disease, healthy aging and mental illness and other conditions affecting women will be a major focus of the new national strategy.

The 29 new medical research projects into women's health conditions is the first commitment of the new strategy.

The projects will zero in on significant health challenges that affect Australian women including breast cancer, maternal health, immunisation rates and cardiovascular disease, a leading cause of death in Australian women.

Specific research will include ways to reduce the failure rate of IVF, improve immunisation uptake in under-immunised children and pregnant women and seek new treatments for women with aggressive and metastatic breast cancer.

These cutting edge research projects have the potential to save many lives and change the way we approach women's health.

Though females born in Australia in 2015 can expect to live to 84.5 years, women continue to face health challenges.

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.

More than half of all women have a chronic disease and almost one in two Australian women will experience a mental health problem over the course of their lives.

Maintaining a healthy weight while pregnant is also a challenge for many women.

The women's forum held in Canberra today is the first in a number of consultation opportunities for the development of the National Women's Health Strategy.

The meeting involved more than 50 groups from a wide range of organisations including the Australasian Menopause Society, the Jean Hailes Foundation, the Australian Women's Health Network, Butterfly Foundation and the Australian Medical Association.

A public consultation process will also take place later in the year.

(ENDS)

The projects include:

Investigator	Project	Institution	Funding
Prof Helen Marshall	Examine interventions and strategies to improve immunisation uptake in underimmunised children and pregnant women and develop evidence based targeted immunisation programs to improve equity in child health.	University of Adelaide	\$487,893
Prof Geoffrey Lindeman	To bridge the translational gap (the 'Valley of Death') between world-class research discoveries and their transfer to early phase trials for patients with breast cancer, while advancing the training of the next generation of breast cancer researchers.	Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research	\$2,496,428
Prof Maria Makrides	Testing the impact of diets and nutritional supplements on improving the health of pregnant women and their children, including reducing the risk of having a premature baby, improving the growth and development of premature babies and how eating extra eggs and peanuts in pregnancy and while breastfeeding might actually reduce allergies to these foods in babies.	University of Adelaide	\$860,385
Prof Elizabeth Sullivan	In partnership with Aboriginal communities, young Aboriginal women in prison or recently in prison, their families, and service providers we will co-produce and build capability in the through care workforce to deliver culturally appropriate, tailored services for the young Aboriginal women.	University of Technology Sydney	\$955,648
Dr SantRayn Pasricha	Will find new solutions for anaemia through a programme of large, innovative randomised controlled trials (set in Malawi and Bangladesh), translational research to understand effects of iron on intestinal health, and policy development and research on definitions of anaemia with the World Health Organisation.	Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research	\$437,036

Dr Thomas Cox	1) Develop innovative laboratory tools that better mimic the cancer extracellular matrix (ECM); 2) Deepen our understanding of how cancer ECM contributes to treatment failure and resistance; 3) Develop new combination therapies that target the ECM.	Garvan Institute of Medical Research	\$483,404
A/Pr Alexander Swarbrick	Using cutting-edge technologies, study the genetics of breast cancer cells and the tissue environment in which they grow. This extremely novel research aims to find new treatments for women with aggressive and metastatic breast cancer.	Garvan Institute of Medical Research	\$649,175
Prof Danielle Mazza	The aim of SPHERE is to improve the quality, safety, and capacity of primary health care services to achieve better outcomes in women's sexual and reproductive health.	Monash University	\$2,499,270
Dr Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino	This fellowship proposes a body of work spanning diagnostics to therapeutics and providing a better understanding of the pathogenesis of preeclampsia and fetal growth restriction.	University of Melbourne	\$483,404
Prof Peter Vuillermin	Population based research into the role of commensal bacteria in the prevention of immune related disease.	Deakin University	\$290,044
Dr Megan Gow	This research program will a) determine how complicated pregnancies influence the health of the offspring by examining longitudinal data from three studies; and b) determine whether lifestyle interventions for women who experience complicated pregnancies improve health outcomes of the offspring.	University of Sydney	\$327,192
A/Pr Pradeep Tanwar	This work is directed at elucidating the proteins involved in both normal and abnormal reproductive development and has demonstrated that molecular signals integral to reproductive tract development are the same signals that are disrupted during disease, driving the pathogenesis of ovarian and endometrial cancers. Based on this knowledge, this research seeks to develop novel treatments for ovarian and endometrial cancers to improve clinical outcomes.	University of Newcastle	\$483,404
Prof Gita Mishra	Examine how the risk factors that women face combine to influence non-communicable diseases (NCDs) across life; quantify their impacts on health services use; and identify how best to transform current approaches to prevent NCDs among women.	University of Queensland	\$2,495,848
Ms Aya Mousa	Use novel techniques to measure hundreds of lipids to examine whether certain lipid species contribute to gestational diabetes development and whether these lipids are altered by diet, lifestyle, and/or drug therapies.	Monash University	\$327,192

Dr Sarah Glastras	Discover how gene expression is permanently changed by maternal obesity and the role of the placenta, in both mice and humans and explore the effect of weight gain in pregnancy on offspring health.	University of Sydney	\$232,315
Dr Sarah Marshall	Develop new and better treatments that will allow women with even the worst preeclampsia to continue their pregnancy so that their baby can be born better grown and healthier.	Monash University	\$327,192
A/Pr Emily Callander	Using a novel model based on linked administrative data for 186,000 births, this project will assess the value of different types of maternity services to individuals and to the health system.	James Cook University	\$437,036
A/Pr Megan Passey	This fellowship will test a range of systems-based interventions to improve access and quality of care for Aboriginal and rural communities and build an inter-disciplinary team of researchers to address these problems.	University of Sydney	\$437,036
Ms Megan Smith	Examine practical issues in translating changes in cervical cancer policies to practice, including barriers, facilitators, communication and equity. The findings will provide vital insights into how this translation can be improved, both in Australia and in other countries planning similar changes.	Cancer Council NSW	\$327,192
Dr Amy Keir	This fellowship will take what is known to improve the health of babies born early (preterm) from research studies and put it into everyday clinical practice.	University of Adelaide	\$193,596
Miss Vanesa Stojanovska	Preterm babies exposed to inflammation during pregnancy have a high incidence of breathing difficulties and brain injury, which often lead to Cerebral Palsy. This research aims to investigate whether inflammation injures the fetal brainstem - a life-sustaining brain region which controls our breathing, and whether anti-inflammatory treatments can protect against this injury. Outcomes of this work will guide clinical trials focused on reducing the burden of preterm brain injury.	Monash University	\$327,192
Prof Roger Daly	Cancer cells often exhibit changes in growth signals transmitted inside the cell. By applying powerful technologies to map these into signalling networks, this research aims to characterize the functional role and regulation of these networks and how they relate to specific cancer types, leading to the identification of novel therapeutic targets and biomarkers. The ultimate outcome of this work will be improved and personalised treatments for cancer patients, and hence reduced morbidity and mortality.	Monash University	\$157,077

Prof Andrew Scott	This project aims to develop a novel monoclonal antibody that has specifically targets advanced and metastatic breast cancer, enabling delivery of potent drugs into cancer cells, and inhibition of abnormal tumour cell growth.	La Trobe University	\$985,528
Dr Tracey Edgell	This research seeks to predict if the mother's body is ready to accept and nurture an embryo, establish pregnancy and continuing to a live birth by collecting blood from women at three sites and measuring six proteins in the blood. Successful outcome would reduce the failure rate of in vitro fertilization (IVF).	Monash University	\$347,035
Dr Yik Chan	This study will investigate the impact of maternal exposure to air pollution in offspring and how it affects the later development of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases patients (COPD).	University of Technology Sydney	\$327,192
Dr Vasilios Panagopoulos	This study aims to identify the role of Grem1 in promoting breast cancer growth and spread and identify Grem1 is a viable target as a new strategy for the urgent treatment of BrCa.	University of Adelaide	\$327,192
Dr Nicole Kellow	Advanced Glycation Endproducts (AGEs) are formed when sugars and proteins stick together, resulting in the brown colour, caramel flavour and sticky surface of heated foods. AGEs in food can be absorbed into our bodies and damage body tissues. Obese women who struggle to become pregnant have an increased build-up of AGEs in their uterus, which inhibits their ability to conceive. This research will investigate whether a low-AGE diet can improve fertility outcomes in obese women who are unable to get pregnant.	Monash University	\$327,192
Dr Katherine Levett	The use of caesarean section and other interventions in birth are becoming more common and contribute significantly to complications for both mothers and infants. Reviews of maternity care recommend reducing unnecessary interventions in labour, which can lead to a caesarean. This project, developed from a pilot trial, proposes to assess the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of an antenatal education program, designed to reduce a woman's need for epidural analgesia and likelihood of caesarean.	University of Notre Dame Australia	\$327,192

Ms Michelle Bovill	This research aims to explore non-pharmacological strategies for smoking cessation to support Aboriginal mothers quit smoking during pregnancy. Through an analysis of current evidence for non-pharmacotherapy strategies to smoking cessation and engaging with Aboriginal women and communities using Indigenous research methodologies, this research will unite Aboriginal knowledges, wisdom and expertise with scientific knowledge validated through a cluster trial in Aboriginal Medical Services.	University of Newcastle	\$338,192
--------------------	--	-------------------------	-----------