

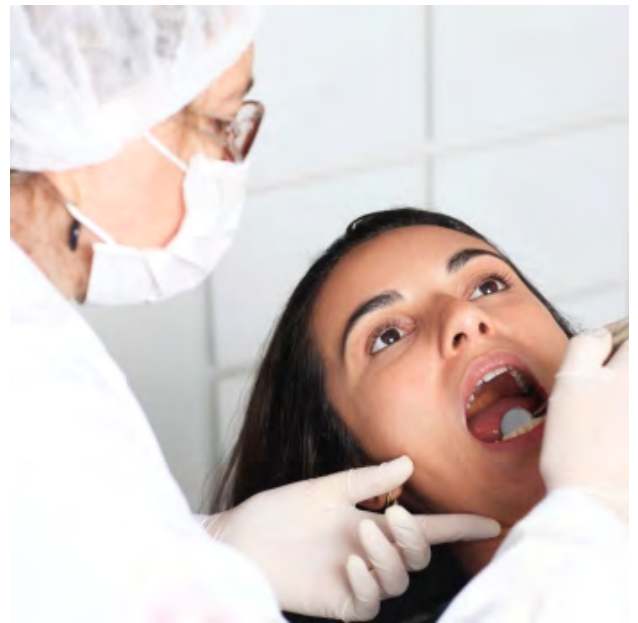
RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Midwife Initiated Oral Health-Dental Service

Dr Ajesh George, Professor Maree Johnson and Associate Professor Hannah Dahlen from the School of Nursing and Midwifery together with Dr Shilpi Ajwani, Associate Professor Sameer Bhole and Sharon Ellis from Sydney & South Western Sydney Local Health District and Professor Anthony Blinkhorn from University of Sydney are investigating the effectiveness of a Midwife Initiated Oral Health-Dental Service (MIOH-DS). This research is funded through the Australian Dental Association (NSW Branch) Limited.

'Poor oral health during pregnancy can affect the woman's oral health as well as the infant's health,' says Dr George. 'Hormonal fluctuations during pregnancy increase the susceptibility of pregnant women to oral infections. Hormonal variations, in combination with changes in the oral flora, put pregnant women at a higher risk of suffering various dental problems such as gingivitis and periodontitis. Gingivitis affects up to 75% of pregnant women while periodontitis, which is the more destructive condition of the oral tissues, is said to affect one in three women of child bearing age.'

The team will pilot the MIOH-DS service at a large metropolitan hospital in South-Western Sydney using a 3 group randomised control trial. Intervention groups will receive either the MIOH-DS service which will include: a midwifery intervention involving oral health education, brief oral assessment and referrals and a dental intervention involving prompt treatment at dental clinics (through a voucher) or the MIOH service involving midwifery intervention and referral to current dental services. The control group will not receive any midwifery or dental intervention (current practice) but will be provided (if required) dental referrals after pregnancy. All participants will receive oral health promotional material at the time of recruitment.



The findings of this study will inform both state and national policy on the role of midwives and dentists in providing oral care to pregnant women and, indirectly, their infants. The evidence generated from the study and testing of the referral pathways will provide an intervention model (validated screening tool, pathways, decision-making and service algorithms, guidelines) relevant to all Australian child-bearing women and their antenatal care providers.

Project Title: Piloting of a Midwife Initiated Oral Health-Dental Service (MIOH-DS) to improve the oral health of pregnant women
Funding has been set at: \$11,000
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<http://www.uws.edu.au/nursingandmidwifery>
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