

# MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday October 12<sup>th</sup> 2005



Government of South Australia  
Children, Youth and Women's  
Health Service

## **Women's and children's health research boosted by over \$5 million in funding**

The Women's and Children's Hospital, part of the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service, and in association with the University of Adelaide, has received funding for eight grants worth \$5,143,775 from the National Health and Medical Research Council. These funds will be used over three to five years to conduct medical research to help solve women's and children's health problems.

The funding, which commences in 2006, covers a number of major areas – mental health, health of newborn babies, treatments for stroke and brain disease, gene therapy, lead and our children's health, and fatty acids in pregnancy and allergy.

Summaries of two of these grants:

### **Using vaginal progesterone to prevent breathing problems in premature babies**

Over 90% of babies born very premature (less than 34 weeks of pregnancy) need breathing support. These babies are also at increased risk of dying and survivors have a risk of long-term disability. This research looks at whether vaginal progesterone, given during pregnancy to women who have previously had a premature baby, can reduce the risks to the second baby – \$1,202,350 to Prof Caroline Crowther, Dr Jodie Dodd, Dr Andy McPhee and Ms Vicki Flenady.

### **Can fish fatty acids given during pregnancy reduce children's allergies?**

Over the last 20 years, Australian diets have changed dramatically to include more n-6 fatty acids and less n-3 (fish) fatty acids. A link has been shown between these dietary changes and the rise in allergic disease over the same period in Australia. This research looks at whether tuna fish oil, given in the second half of pregnancy to women at high risk of having a baby with allergies, does result in fewer children between one and three years of age with allergies – \$767,500 to Dr Maria Makrides, Assoc Prof Bob Gibson, Dr Michael Gold, Dr Joanna Hawkes, Assoc Prof Susan Prescott and Prof Heddy Zola.

In addition to the above eight grants, the Hospital has chief investigators on other NH&MRC grants totalling \$1,426,625 involving Flinders, Sydney and Monash Universities.

Topics covered are: gene therapy for the eye; therapy against super-bugs; and novel drugs for fungal infections.

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For more information or to organise interviews please contact:

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