



Healthy Development Adelaide  
A Research and Innovation Cluster in South Australia

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

**GET YOUR RESEARCH,  
NEWS, PAPERS, MEDIA  
RELEASES,  
RECRUITMENT TRIALS,  
EVENTS OUT THERE!!**

*Submissions by end  
March for our next  
issue out in April*

**Social Media  
submissions  
(TWITTER, FB AND  
LINKEDIN):**

*Submissions open  
anytime*

**Submissions must align  
with HDA:**

We aim to promote, facilitate and enable multidisciplinary research to advance understanding of healthy development, ensuring the physical, psychological and social health of infants, children and adolescents.

## OUR PARTNERS

### PLATINUM



### GOLD



**University of  
South Australia**



**Flinders  
University**

### SILVER



**Government of South Australia**  
Department for Education



**Government of  
South Australia**

Women's and Children's Health Network



Women and Kids



**Wellbeing SA**



**Government of South Australia**  
Department for Child Protection

### BRONZE



## NEW HDA Co-CONVENOR A/PROFESSOR ZOHRA LASSI

**WELCOME ZOHRA!!**



A/Professor Zohra Lassi is an NHMRC Emerging Leader-2 Fellow within the Robinson Research Institute and School of Public Health at the University of Adelaide.

Zohra is a trained epidemiologist recognised internationally for her work identifying interventions for improving reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition in disadvantaged settings by advancing knowledge in public health practice and translation into global health policies and guidelines. She has published 200+ peer-reviewed papers, an author of 11 book chapters and several research/technical reports. Her research has contributed significantly to global maternal and newborn policies, particularly, her work with community health workers and outreach services has contributed significantly to global integrated maternal and newborn outreach guidelines. Her work with the WHO and

PMNCH in developing consensus-based essential interventions for women, children, and adolescents is the dominant set of agreed interventions guiding global policy.

Zohra has made sustained contributions to Cochrane as an author, referee, and trainer. She is a current Feedback Editor for the Cochrane Acute Respiratory Infections Group and was awarded the prestigious international Kenneth Warren Prize (2011) from Cochrane for preparing a very high-quality systematic review. Her expertise in evidence synthesis has also been recognised through invited membership of five separate Lancet Intervention Review Groups (Child Health Optimising (0-19) Series 2021, Maternal and Child Undernutrition Series 2021, Every Newborn Series 2014, Maternal and Child Nutrition Series 2013, Diarrhoea and Pneumonia Series 2013) and subsequent publications. In addition, she has been appointed as a Technical Advisor to the WHO on three occasions. She is 2021 Episteme Laureate by Sigma Nursing for being an excellent reflection of the nursing profession and acknowledging a breakthrough in nursing knowledge development that impacts the underserved relating to nutrition/malnutrition. She is also a recipient of 2022 SA Young Tall Poppy Science Award.

## HDA Executive Committee

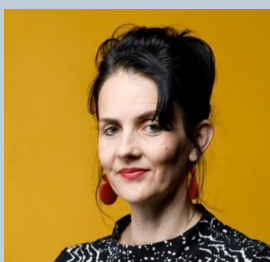
We welcome new members to the committee. Our Executive Committee has been expanded to oversee the assessments of our grant, award and scholarship programs.

New Committee members:

A/Professor Zohra Lassi, Robinson Research Institute, University of Adelaide  
A/Professor Kathy Gatford, Robinson Research Institute, University of Adelaide  
Professor Joanne Arciuli, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Flinders University

Existing Committee members:

Professor Claire Roberts, College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders University  
Professor Carol Maher, Allied Health and Human Performance, University of South Australia  
Professor Janna Morrison, Clinical and Health Sciences, University of South Australia



Prof Joanne Arciuli



A/Prof Kathy Gatford



## NEW HDA PARTNER WELLBEING SA

**WE WELCOME OUR NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH WELLBEING SA!!**



Wellbeing SA is a state government agency with a long term vision to create a balanced health and well-being system that supports improved physical, mental and social wellbeing for all South Australians.

The early years is one of Wellbeing SA's priority focus areas. As an agency we are working in partnership to support all South Australian children to have the best start in life and collaborate on a range of initiatives to support evidence based action across child and youth health. Our work also advocates for and acknowledges importance of supporting parents and caregivers to care for their children.

Find out more about Wellbeing SA's work to improve the health and wellbeing of South Australian children and young people at [wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au](https://www.wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au)

### ::: REPORT ::: NAVIGATING THE EARLY YEARS SYSTEM IN SA

Wellbeing SA and Flinders University Caring Futures Institute have partnered to undertake research to better understand caregivers' experiences in Navigating the Early Years System in South Australia. Opportunities are present within existing touchpoints to create a more cohesive and coordinated system that meets the needs of all caregivers and their children, especially those who need the support most.

The three key project findings were:

- > Caregivers in SA have diverse and varied access to, and engagement with, the Early Years System.
- > The existing Early Years System meets the needs of caregivers but often misses those who need it most, such as culturally and linguistically diverse, indigenous, in low socio-economic circumstances, residing in rural and remote areas, child or caregiver disability.
- > There are various challenges related to the Early Years System being overwhelming and difficult, however there are some key opportunities for increasing engagement such as assisting caregivers in navigating existing touchpoints.

Read the full report's recommendations here <https://www.wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au/our-work/early-years-children-young-people/navigating-the-early-years>

## HDA SCHOOL COMMUNICATOR 2023

### A/PROFESSOR ZOHRA LASSI, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE



Congratulations to A/Professor Zohra Lassi, our HDA Schools Communicator for 2023. This award is funded by the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation (CRF).

Zohra is an Associate Professor and Senior Research Fellow within the Robinson Research Institute and School of Public Health at the University of Adelaide. Zohra has also just joined us as Co-Convenor of HDA.

Zohra will be delivering her interactive session on Sustainable Development Goals and Global Health to a number of South Australian schools this year.

Zohra's research focus is on identifying and implementing interventions for improving sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition in disadvantaged settings by advancing knowledge in public health practice and translation into global health policies and guidelines.

"I am honoured to receive the HDA Schools Communicator Award and excited to visit schools to increase students' understanding of social and wider determinants of health and how one can contribute to improving health of people living in disadvantaged, developing and international communities", Zohra Lassi says.

The goal of this award is to help our emerging researchers, like Zohra, to showcase their research to South Australian high school students with the aim of getting them excited about the amazing opportunities open to them in health science or science career pathways. Science is to obtain new facts, but most importantly, science is to discover new ways of thinking about them. It is, therefore, important to engage students and make them understand the problems of today and tomorrow because students of today are the leaders of tomorrow.

Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation Executive Director, Greg Ward, says the opportunity to fund HDA's Schools Communicator Award provides yet another platform for CRF to expand its commitment to fostering children's research careers in South Australia.

"CRF has been a proud supporter of HDA since 2007 through its PhD Excellence Awards and now in its third year, the Schools Communicator Award," Ward says.

"This excites us as it provides yet another opportunity to inspire young people to consider a career in research, and importantly, in children's health and development. We congratulate Zohra on receiving the 2023 HDA Schools Communicator Award and encourage her dedication to inspire younger generations to consider a future that will ultimately lead to improving the lives of children."

## HDA TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT RECIPIENTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FOLLOWING MEMBERS WHO WILL RECEIVE  
\$1,000 EACH FOR ROUND 1 THIS YEAR.

**Dr Anya Arthurs**, Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute, Flinders University: Interstate collaboration and lab visit, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia.

**Dr Sarah Wallwork**, IIMPACT in Health, University of South Australia: Canadian Pain Society Annual Scientific Meeting and Lab visit to PEAK Research Lab, Canada.

**Catherine Dimasi**, Early Origins of Adult Health Research Group, Clinical and Health Sciences, University of South Australia: Society for Reproductive Investigation 70th Annual Scientific Meeting, Brisbane, Australia.

**Jess Judd**, School of Public Health, University of Adelaide: Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference, Gold Coast, Australia.

## UPCOMING HDA AND WCH GRAND ROUND

Join us for the Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA) and Women's and Children's Hospital Grand Round on **Promoting the health and wellbeing of South Australian parents and caregivers and their babies.**



### OUR SPEAKER

**Professor Katina D'Onise**, Executive Director  
Prevention and Population Health Directorate  
Wellbeing SA.

Katina oversees a range of functions including Health Promotion, Cancer Screening and Epidemiology (data collections, data analysis, evaluation, IT systems).

A Public Health Physician and Epidemiologist by training, Katina has previously worked in communicable disease control (including for COVID-19), Aboriginal Health and in academia. Katina's special interest is in legislative reform, research translation, Aboriginal health and health equity.

Using a health promoting approach, the Health Promotion Branch works in partnership across and outside of government to support the health and wellbeing of South Australian parents, caregivers and their babies. During this talk, Professor Katina D'Onise will describe some of the work by the Health Promotion Branch and Epidemiology Branch to support and improve a wide range behavioural, social and environmental factors that contribute to good health and wellbeing.

### OUR CHAIR

Rachael Yates (HDA Ambassador), Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Women's and Children's Health Network.

### Wednesday 22 February, 12.30-1.30pm (in person and MS Teams)

Queen Victoria Building, lecture theatre, level 1

Women's and Children's Hospital, North Adelaide and online via MS Teams.

This event is free and open to everyone to attend from researchers, clinicians, students, government and the community.

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/527851226227>

## HDA Awards and Partnership Placements - OPEN NOW

### Healthy Development Adelaide Student Scholarship Award 2023-2024

Open to schools to nominate a student enrolled in Year 11 and wants to proceed to tertiary education in a field relevant to health or education.

Award = \$1,000 over two years : Applications close 5pm Tuesday 7 February

### HDA Women's Excellence in Research Award 2023

Open to HDA women mid-career researchers with 5-10 years post PhD undertaking basic or clinical, biomedical or social science research in developmental health, resilience or disease in pregnancy, infancy, childhood or adolescence.

Award = \$1,000 + certificate : Applications close 5pm Monday 20 February

### HDA Partnership Placements 2023

Open to our HDA second and third year PhD students and early and mid-career research members up to 5 years post PhD.

Applications close 5pm Wednesday 1 March

For further information contact [anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au)



## HDA MEMBER PROFILE - DR TESS GREGORY TELETHON KIDS INSTITUTE



Tess is a Senior Research Fellow at the Telethon Kids Institute, and holds an adjunct Senior Lecturer position in the School of Public Health at the University of Adelaide.

Her work focuses on the social and emotional wellbeing, development and academic achievement of children and adolescents. Her research is primarily quantitative and utilises large, population-level datasets including the South Australian Wellbeing and Engagement Collection (WEC), the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). She has a strong commitment to working in collaboration with government partners to translate research findings into policy and practice to support children and adolescents to thrive. She works closely with policy makers in education departments across the country at a state/territory

and federal government level through her work with the AEDC.

Tess is a senior member of the Early Years Systems Evidence research team at the Telethon Kids Institute, which is led by Associate Professor Yasmin Harman-Smith. Our team employs pragmatic and robust research methodologies and evaluation designs, utilising population and administrative data, to address pertinent questions facing policy makers and service providers.

Our breadth of work enables us to advocate for cohesion across the system with a focus on improving the experiences of families as they progress through universal services (i.e., antenatal services to maternal child health services to early education and care and into schooling) and as they touch targeted aspects of the system (e.g., child protection, mental health services, relationship support, disability support). Our team have recently moved into new Telethon Kids Institute offices on North Terrace and are looking forward to building our collaborations with other academics interested in Healthy Development in South Australia.

Email: [tess.gregory@telethonkids.org.au](mailto:tess.gregory@telethonkids.org.au)

### BECOME A HDA MEMBER TODAY ...

Join us in fostering South Australian multidisciplinary research, policy and practice at basic, clinical, social and population levels to enhance the healthy development and wellbeing of Australia's future generations.

HDA membership is open to researchers, PhD students and professionals working in areas relevant to HDA's research.

#### Membership benefits

- Access to travel grants (PhD students and early career researchers)
- Access to PhD scholarships
- Eligibility to apply for HDA awards
- Free HDA event attendance certificates towards your continuing professional development points
- Build relationships with people working in areas relevant to the health and development of young children and adolescents
- Contribute your knowledge and expertise to make a difference
- Support HDA into the future

1 year (2022) for \$20 or 3 years (to 31 Dec 2024) for \$50 (excluding GST).

<https://health.adelaide.edu.au/healthy-development-adelaide/get-involved>

# EXTENDING THE LENS ON AUSTRALIA DAY

## DR JUDITH THOMAS

### Extending the lens<sup>1</sup> on Australia Day, 2023



“From Ethiopia to Australia”, Sandy, S. (2013).

*Donkeys can't fly on planes*. Kids Own Publishing, p8.

Thank you, Glenn Saxby, for your innovative discussion of the creative and critical use of fairy tales in the classrooms of today. Let's open up the lens of cultural understanding of the many diverse cultural groups in Australia, for example. Accessing the various cultural stories can reveal intimate insights into our understanding the difficult journeys, disturbing emotions and age-old traditions of our refugee and migrant students coming to our primary and secondary school classrooms.

The classic cultural stories<sup>2</sup> of the South Sudanese provide insight into the characters, morals, values and behaviours of the animals in their natural world, for example. The subsequent storytelling, a feature of the common oral tradition<sup>3</sup> mode, is an extended family experience repeated over the generations.

However, the recent stories and hand-drawn illustrations by the young South Sudanese refugee children in Victoria present moving tales of significant and often difficult family experiences in the form of recollections and memories. Their accompanying personal drawings indicate the stark contrast of life at home and the now in Australia. The common school topic of Migration<sup>4</sup> can be enriched by utilising these first-hand recollections in words and pictures in the classroom. Similarly, *The Book of Sudanese Cows*<sup>5</sup> published separately in English and Dinka and *Cooking Sudanese Food*<sup>6</sup> can expose our students to other native languages, significances of Cows for example, and common culinary experiences transposed to real life in the suburbs of Australian cities and regional areas throughout the country. Furthermore, the *Milet English-Dinka Picture Dictionary*<sup>7</sup> provides the essential vocabulary to not only play soccer for sports and games, cook in the kitchen but to visit the bathroom and the schoolroom. Last but not least is *This Is My Home*<sup>8</sup>, the poignant sharing of “stories with young people about my childhood in South Sudan and my personal journey of coming to Australia”. How significant is this work especially on our Australia Day, 2023.

<sup>1</sup> In response to *Happily ever after? A new chapter for traditional fairy tales*, Glenn Saxby, HDA Newsletter, December 2022, p 10.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas, J. (2017). *From Southern Sudan to Adelaide: learning journeys of refugee secondary students* <https://digital.library.adelaide.edu.au/dspace/handle/2440/111486>, p170.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p33.

<sup>4</sup> Sandy, S. (2013). *Donkeys can't fly on planes*. Kids Own Publishing.

<sup>5</sup> Sudanese 'Early Learning is Fun' group at Sacred Heart Primary School, (2011). *The Book of Sudanese Cows*. Kids' Own Publishing.

<sup>6</sup> Anglicare Victoria Parentzone Northern. (2011). *Cooking Sudanese Food*. Kids' Own Publishing.

<sup>7</sup> Turhan, S., & Hagin, H. (2003). *Milet Picture Dictionary, English-Dinka*. Milet.

<sup>8</sup> *This Is My Home By Australian families of South Sudanese heritage*. (2021). Kids' Own Publishing, p3.

Dr Judith. S. Thomas

Education Specialist/Cultural Awareness Training/Youth Justice/Project Management/ Researcher/  
International Students/Humanitarian

# Painting an accurate profile of Adelaide's homeless

Media Release - 27 December, University of Adelaide



University of Adelaide researchers have built a comprehensive profile of homelessness and associated health issues in Adelaide.

"Homelessness is increasing in Australia and other countries, but inconsistent definitions and data limitations make homelessness difficult to understand. We want to change this by contributing our comprehensive study," said the University of Adelaide's Dr Joanne Flavel, Researcher in Stretton Institute and School of Social Sciences.

Dr Flavel led the collaborative study with colleagues including the University of Adelaide's Dr Toby Freeman and Professor Fran Baum.

"We analysed data to produce a complex descriptive profile of people experiencing homelessness in Adelaide that identified differences in the demographics between rough sleepers, people who are couch surfing, in emergency accommodation or temporary accommodation, and highlighted their health needs," said Dr Flavel.

The profile of homelessness in Adelaide included:

- Housing crisis is the main reason cited for homelessness; A high prevalence of poor health outcomes & use of emergency health services by homeless people; High rates of mental health & physical conditions including depression, anxiety & dental problems; People that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are over-represented in experiencing homelessness; Men are more likely to be experiencing rough sleeping homelessness; A higher rate of homelessness services used by

women than men in two of five data sets (an example of such homelessness services is organisations that receive government funding to deliver accommodation-related and/or personal services to people experiencing homelessness or at risk); and Young people are more likely to couch surf or be in temporary accommodation rather than sleeping rough.

The team analysed data sets including the: national ABS Census from 2016; the Homeless to Home (H2H) state data from 2018-2019; the 2018-19 national Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; the Adelaide Zero Project By-name List 2018-2019; and records from SA Health about Royal Adelaide Hospital's homeless patients from 2018-2019.

"Our approach was comprehensive because it used a wide variety of data from five sources, including local, state and national perspectives. Yet, it is likely still an underestimation of the true scale of homelessness," said Dr Flavel. "More accurate identification of who is homeless, their health needs and service access is important as it improves the assessment of health services used by people who are experiencing homelessness, and the consequential costs borne by the health system.

"Healthcare services often consider the homeless population as 'hard to reach', but our data suggest it is services that are hard to reach, and better use of data can help service providers make their services easier to access.

"An accurate profile of homelessness helps in devising appropriate responses to crises that adequately support people experiencing homelessness. Our research will be provided to service providers and government to help inform more nuanced and effective services in the future, to tackle the complex public health issue of homelessness."

Dr Flavel, Dr Freeman, and Professor Baum are all members of the University of Adelaide's Stretton Health Equity Program.



## Omega-3 Screening Test for Pregnant Women

Pregnant women with low omega-3 status are at a higher risk of having their baby born prematurely than women with sufficient omega-3.

If you're currently less than 20 weeks pregnant, you can find out your omega-3 levels through a new screening test offered by SA Pathology in collaboration with the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute.

Talk to your doctor or maternal care provider about getting the free screening test today.



If you're pregnant, ask your doctor about the omega-3 screening test.



## Testing time for baby sleep

Media Release - 29 December, Flinders University



A study of more than 2000 parents of babies aged 3-18 months highlights the benefits and safety of behavioural sleep interventions (BSIs) – as difficult they might seem to implement. The vast majority (64%) of the 2090 families reported using at least one of the three common BSIs – ‘parental presence’, ‘controlled crying’ (known as modified extinction) or ‘cry it out’ (unmodified extinction) – as a way to promote infant sleep self-regulation so infants learn to settle themselves to sleep.

“Pediatric insomnia is very common and tends to cause considerable distress for families,” says Flinders University clinical psychology researcher and international infant sleep expert Dr Michal Kahn, who is currently Assistant Professor at Tel Aviv University, Israel.

“In the clinic, we meet parents who haven’t had a good night’s sleep in months and sometimes years, which of course impacts their mood, cognitive performance (for example, at work), and also the relationships with their partner and baby. There is controversy about the safety and even necessity of BSIs, yet claims against these interventions are theoretical in nature, whereas research evidence to date has not provided any indication of short- or long-term adverse consequences of BSIs.

“Our study provides further evidence for the safety of these interventions by demonstrating that parents who had and had not used them did not differ in measures of parent-infant bonding, parent de-

pression, or parent sleep.”

In terms of infant sleep, the study found that implementing unmodified and modified extinction was associated with longer and more consolidated infant sleep, suggesting that these interventions are effective in decreasing pediatric insomnia symptoms.

“Many parents may want to try these interventions but are reluctant given non-based claims that they are unsafe,” Dr Kahn says. “Parents and clinicians should thus be aware of the range of safe evidence-based treatments available to ameliorate infant sleep problems, which could considerably improve parents’ health and wellbeing.”

The US-based study was presented by Dr Kahn and senior pediatric sleep experts Dr Michael Gradisar and Dr Natalie Barnett at this year’s World Sleep Congress and has been published in *The Journal of Pediatrics*.

The measures used included questionnaires and permission from families for further evidence from baby monitoring devices. Participating parents completed online questionnaires regarding their infant’s sleep, their own sleep, daytime sleepiness, depression levels, and parent-infant bonding. Infant sleep was assessed via objective, exploratory auto-videosomnography data obtained from the 14-days prior to survey completion.

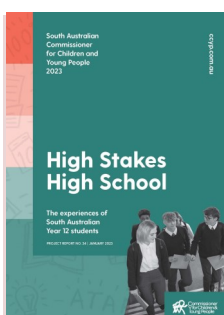
The article, Implementation of Behavioral Interventions for Infant Sleep Problems in Real-World Setting 2022 by M Kahn, N Barnett and M Gradisar has been published in *The Journal of Pediatrics* (Elsevier) DOI: 10.1016/j.jpeds.2022.10.038

### Key points of the study:

- 64% of parents reported implementing BSIs. The average age at intervention was 5.3 months.
- Unmodified and Modified Extinction were rated as significantly more difficult to implement compared with Parental Presence, but also as more helpful, shorter, and quicker to show improvements.
- Infant nighttime sleep was longer and more consolidated in the Unmodified and Modified Extinction groups compared with the Parental Presence and no -BSI groups.
- No differences were found between BSI groups in parent sleep, sleepiness, depression, or parent-infant bonding.

## SA Commissioner for Children and Young People Report - High Stakes High School

A report examining the experiences of South Australian year 12 students.  
<https://www.ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports/>



## South Australian researchers find boiled peanuts could help reduce children's peanut allergies

Media Release - 17 January, CRF news



A new clinical trial, funded by the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation, has found that boiling peanuts can help up to 80 per cent of allergic children become desensitised to them.

Boiling the nuts changes their chemical composition - lessening the likelihood of an allergic reaction and allowing researchers to gradually introduce nuts, which had been boiled for decreasing amounts of time, to children involved in the year-long trial. By the end of the trial, 80% of the children could tolerate a dose of 12 unboiled peanuts.

While it is potentially life-changing news for parents of children with severe nut allergies, such as nine-year-old Xavier Connery, experts warn against trying it at home. However, scientists are working on further research with more widespread applications. The trial was conducted by Flinders University and the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, and involved 70 children aged 6-18 who suffered all from varying degrees of peanut allergies.

"Our clinical trial shows promising early signs in demonstrating that boiling peanuts may provide a safe and effective method for treating peanut-allergic children with sequential doses of boiled and roasted peanuts over an extended period of time," CRF Fellow and Associate Professor Luke Grzeskowiak said.

Over the first 12 weeks of the trial, the peanuts given to the children were boiled for 12 hours. Over the next 20 weeks, they were boiled for just two hours and then for the final 20 weeks roasted, unboiled peanuts were given. While 61 per cent of the participants experienced "treatment-related adverse affects" during the trial, just three children had to withdraw because of the those affects — with scientists saying it "demonstrated a favourable safety profile".

Of the 67 participants who reached the end of the trial, 56 (or 80 per cent of the original cohort) had become desensitised to the target dose of peanuts. And of the 45 desensitised participants who were involved in follow-up research six months later, 43 could still consume the target dosage of peanuts with no serious allergic reactions, Grzeskowiak said. The research is good news for Brigitte Connery, and could reduce the stress

over meal times for her son Xavier — who is among the 3 per cent of children in the Western world who suffer from peanut allergies.

When he was just 18 months old, Xavier was rushed to hospital after eating a small amount of satay sauce. "His mouth started swelling up, he started getting hives around his mouth and face and then ... he projectile vomited," Brigitte said.

While some paediatricians have previously recommended various types of oral immunotherapy (OIT), including increasing amounts of food allergens given under medical supervision depending in the severity of the allergy, no OIT products have been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

University of South Australia expert Dr Preethi Eldi, who is looking at developing vaccines for peanut allergies, said studies such as this latest one were a positive step to having OITs approved. "What these OIT trials do is give you the option to increase your threshold, but depending on you continuing to undergo that treatment," Eldi said. "That's the thing with OIT, (it's a) long or life-long treatment ... it makes it tricky to keep that threshold of desensitisation."

Eldi said previous studies had shown about 20 per cent of children who had undergone OIT had completely overcome their peanut allergy, while 80 per cent were more tolerant. Xavier said if was able to overcome his allergy, it would make meal times much more enjoyable.

"Sometimes I feel left out from eating food," he said. His mother said she would be much less stressed when she wasn't present at Xavier's meal times.

"It would be absolutely life-changing to be really honest with you, because it's something that's always in the back of our minds," Brigitte said.

Grzeskowiak said a larger definitive clinical trial would be necessary further confirm the study's results. "With no currently approved treatment for peanut allergy in Australia, there is a lot more research to be done," he said. "Oral immunotherapy doesn't work for everyone and we are in the process of improving our understanding of how these treatments work and what factors can influence how people respond to treatment. This will be really important for assessing individual suitability for treatment and improve treatment decisions in the future."

The clinical trial was funded by the Channel 7's Children's Research Foundation and published in the journal *Clinical & Experimental Allergy*.

**The Flinders University researchers strongly advised against families trying the experiment at home. "If you don't do it correctly, you may be generating a product that's really still quiet allergic," Associate Professor Tim Chataway said.**

## New partnership strengthening developmental screening in childcare

Caring Futures Institute - Flinders University



A free service being delivered through Flinders University's Health2Go clinic aims to detect developmental delays and other health concerns in children attending childcare centres, in an exciting new initiative demonstrative of the Caring Futures Institute's commitment to a healthy start to life.

Partnership with Goodstart Early Learning centres is being driven by nurse practitioner and lecturer Alicia Bell and Flinders Caring Futures Institute researcher Prof Lucy Chipchase, offering children from predominantly low socio-economic backgrounds screening for conditions such as autism.

Project lead Mrs Bell says the pilot program is helping detect potential problems in children who might otherwise wait months or years to get the help they need. It complements an existing paediatric nurse practitioner clinic offered through Health2Go.

"We're often seeing children who can't afford to go through the private sector, this means if they need to be assessed for autism, for example, they have a minimum 18 month wait," Mrs Bell explains.

With the help of Flinders health students, the team is offering assessments to children between 0-5 years whom educators think could need additional supports, after gaining their parents' consent. Students studying nutrition, dietetics, nursing and physiotherapy are working in teams to deliver the interprofessional service at the childcare centres.

"The educators identify that these kids aren't tracking quite as they should developmentally, which is where we step in," Mrs Bell says.

Using a Brigance developmental screening tool, the students can pinpoint the areas children are delayed. From asking standardised questions and

conducting assessments which look at gross and fine motor skills, receptive and expressive language and social and emotional skills, scores for each developmental domain can be produced. "We then assess whether we need to refer to a speech pathologist, a psychologist, an occupational therapist or if the child needs a full developmental assessment," Mrs Bell says.

Professor Chipchase says the program is an excellent opportunity for Flinders students to develop real-world experience before they enter the workforce. "Moving forward, it has the potential to transform health services across South Australia. We could see students providing a middle ground for people in the community who can't access necessary healthcare. They can be part of the solution for people who clearly aren't getting the help they need."

The team is also providing children with Kudos referrals, to access early intervention funding through the NDIS. Thanks to a Nexus grant of nearly \$10,000, the program is now offered through more than eight centres in the Adelaide metropolitan area.

"It also means I've been able to expand this service to one day a week instead of one day a fortnight," Mrs Bell says.

Early indications suggest the service may have already identified gaps in care that need to be provided, Prof Chipchase says, raising the possibility of Flinders students of other disciplines becoming involved. "We're hoping the next step will be uplifting speech pathology, audiology and potentially optometry into the centres to expand our reach," she says.

Feedback from the students on their experience will help evaluate the success of the interprofessional approach, with the hope they will be encouraged to pursue work in the paediatric field. Mrs Bell says the feedback from centres' educators has been overwhelmingly positive, while many of the parents value the professional input and opportunity to potentially identify problems early.

"I think identifying children with delays in their childcare setting is a really sustainable and feasible option, because so many attend, and getting in early means these children don't have to wait until they get to school to be diagnosed."

For more info on the service, <https://www.health2go.com.au/>

## Independent Inquiry into Foster and Kinship Care in South Australia

Dr Fiona Arney was appointed to lead the inquiry.

Further information and the report >> <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/care-and-support/foster-care/inquiry-into-foster-care>



## Perinatal Mental Health Joint Meeting ABSTRACTS OPEN



Abstract submissions are now being accepted for **The Marcé Society Australasian Chapter for Perinatal Mental Health Joint Meeting with Women's and Children's Health Network Inc.** - Helen Mayo House, in Adelaide, South Australia.

A two Day Conference for researchers and health professionals working with expectant parents and families with newborns and toddlers.

**September 8 and 9, 2023**

Theme: Resilience and Recovery: Sensitive perinatal mental health care for all women and their families  
Sub-themes: Impacts of trauma, loss and adversity in the perinatal period; Supporting and celebrating cultural diversity in perinatal care; Models of care – Facilitating equitable access to care; Experience of becoming a parent.

Venue: Adelaide Convention Centre, North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia

**CALL FOR ABSTRACTS - CLOSES 15 FEBRUARY**

Further information on abstracts and to submit your abstract, email [info@marcesociety.com.au](mailto:info@marcesociety.com.au)

## Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Courses

**Introductory Certificate in Infant Mental Health 2023, Terms 1 & 3**

Term 1: Wednesdays 1 February – 5 April, 2023

Term 3: Wednesdays, 26 July – 27 September, 2023

Register on Eventbrite here <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/introductory-certificate-in-infant-mental-health-tickets-465561094767>

**Introductory Certificate in Perinatal Mental Health 2023, Term 2**

Term 2: Wednesdays, 3 May – 5 July, 2023

Please note, in person attendance only. The course will be run at Helen Mayo House, Glenside Health Precinct, over 10 weeks from 1 February, Wednesdays 3-6pm.

For enquiries email [Tina.Bull@sa.gov.au](mailto:Tina.Bull@sa.gov.au)

## Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference

**2023 Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference  
20-22 March, Gold Coast**

To provide the right mental health care for children and adolescents, we need to identify the gap between what we think the needs of Australian adolescents are, compared with the rates of actual service utilisation. The Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference is designed to provide practical skills, relevant information, personal insight, and strategies for professionals working in child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing. Find out more and register here <https://anzmh.asn.au/>