**Understanding Maternal Mental Health, Mother-Infant Relationship and Child Outcomes: Mercy Pregnancy and Emotional Wellbeing Study**

Megan Galbally1,3, Kelli MacMillan1, Josephine Power2, A Lewis1, S Watson1

1. Murdoch University
2. Mercy Hospital for Women Heidelberg
3. King Edward Memorial Hospital

The Pregnancy Emotional Wellbeing Studies are four linked cohorts across metropolitan Melbourne, Perth and rural WA. The aim is to understand the relationship between maternal mental health and child outcomes including the role of treatment. The design is a prospective pregnancy longitudinal study that recruits women in first trimester and follows up over pregnancy and the postpartum. Women with mental illness, on treatment and control women are included in the studies. Mental Health is assessed using both diagnostic measure as well as self report and antidepressant use is assessed by self-report, hospital records and maternal and cord blood levels. The first cohort is now reaching 4years of age with data from first trimester onwards collected for mother and child including biosamples, survey data, observational measures of interaction and attachment and neurodevelopment outcomes. This will present data from pregnancy to 12 months postpartum on the impact of depression and antidepressants on biological pathways to early parenting, the 6 month postpartum mother-infant interaction task and data from the 4 year old neurodevelopmental assessment. This study is one of few longitudinal pregnancy cohort studies that are specifically designed for understanding mental health and child outcomes. This workshop will discuss three themes:

1. Designing research in perinatal mental health to understand mental health, mother-infant interaction and child developmental and mental health outcomes. What are the challenges, gaps and future directions?
2. How do we understand the significance of the emerging relationship between mother and child from pregnancy across early life? How do we measure this meaningfully?
3. Child development- caveats and challenges in understanding findings for child development and mental health in perinatal and infant mental health research.

Our workshop will invite discussion and audience participation throughout. The MPEWS study will used to illustrate and discuss key challenges and questions facing research that understand the experience of both mother and child in mental health.

**KeyWords :**

Pregnancy; Depression: Antidepressants; Child Outcomes; Attachment

**References :**  
Galbally, M; van IJzendoorn, M; Permezel, M; Saffery, R; Lappas, M; Ryan, J; van Rossum, E;; Teti, D; Johnson A, Lewis A (2017) Mercy Pregnancy and Emotional Wellbeing Study (MPEWS): understanding maternal mental health, fetal programming and child development. Study design and cohort profile. Vol 26 (4), e1558. International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research.