

# Implementing changes in evidence-based management of women living with HIV in pregnancy and postpartum: the strengths of an integrated model of care

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## Background/Purpose:

Established in 2009, the Victorian Maternal Paediatric HIV Program delivers an integrated multidisciplinary model of care for women living with HIV and their infants during pregnancy and the postpartum period. This innovative program was established to address challenges in care transition (between HIV and antenatal care, antenatal and paediatric care and re-engagement in HIV care after birth), and improve translation of evidence in this complex area of clinical practice.

## Approach:

By embedding obstetric and HIV care within antenatal clinics with HIV nurses coordinating care across sites, including paediatric and community-based services, we have achieved expedited implementation of changes in evidence-based practice of HIV care. Consultation between specialist disciplines has occurred in real-time in our program.

## Outcomes/Impact:

The multidisciplinary, embedded nature of the Maternal Paediatric HIV Program has meant that changes to HIV management in pregnant women and their infants can be implemented in a unified manner by obstetricians, infectious diseases physicians, paediatricians and nurses. The program has managed 195 women and 295 infants since its inception. In that time, changes in clinical practice have included mode of

birth, infant feeding and partner disclosure. These examples will be discussed to show the patient and clinician benefits of the model: consistent messaging from healthcare providers regarding complex health issues, and enhanced professional development of clinicians in various disciplines through sharing knowledge and evidence from their own specialist area.

**Innovation and Significance:**

For over 15 years, the Maternal Paediatric HIV Program has provided seamless pregnancy and infant care for women living with HIV and their infants within its partner sites. As a pioneer of an integrated model in Australia, the Program has been able to respond rapidly to changes in the evidence base around birth, infant feeding and transmission to sexual partners, providing up-to-date, best-practice care in a shifting treatment landscape.

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