

Research Seminar – 8th June, 2006

"Buprenorphine and methadone in pregnancy: Effects on the developing infant and child"

Presenter: Justine Whitham

The use of illicit opioid drugs during pregnancy is known to result in a wide range of problems in children. Currently methadone is the only treatment approved for pregnant opioid dependent women and while this treatment has been shown to result in better outcomes for both the mother and child, infant exposure to methadone is associated with problems such as low birth weight and infant withdrawal from the drug. Buprenorphine is now increasingly being used for the treatment of opioid dependence and it appears that that it has advantages over methadone, including reduced infant withdrawal. Currently the use of buprenorphine during pregnancy is restricted because its safety and efficacy has not yet been fully established. Further, there is no information available about the long-term outcomes of children exposed to buprenorphine during pregnancy. The primary aim of this study is to assess the long term outcomes of children exposed to buprenorphine treatment during pregnancy.

Biographical details

Justine Whitham recently commenced study toward her PhD in the Department of Paediatrics, The University of Adelaide. Her research is examining the longitudinal development of infants and young children of mothers receiving opioid maintenance treatment during pregnancy. Justine has had extensive experience coordinating and conducting studies in child and adolescent mental health and recently completed her Masters in Clinical Psychology.

Date and time: Thursday, 8th June 2006, 4.00pm-5.30pm (drinks and nibbles afterwards).

Location: P7-27, Playford Building, University of South Australia, City East Campus, Frome Road, Adelaide.

RSVP: For catering purposes, please contact Elizabeth Oram at the Australian Centre for Child Protection on (08) 8302 4030 or email elizabeth.oram@unisa.edu.au by Monday 5th June, 2006.

Please distribute this invitation to other interested people in your organisation/networks.