

# PARENT-INFANT RESEARCH INSTITUTE & INFANT CLINIC NEWSLETTER



October - December 2006

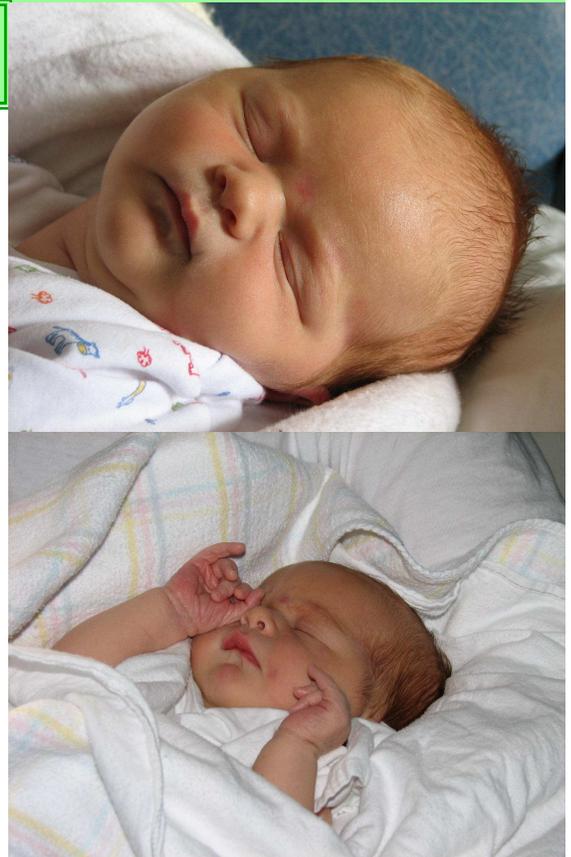


## The Infant Clinic

The Infant Clinic offers a range of services for assistance with maternal mood, adjustment to parenthood, and infant related issues. Individual counselling, group programs, antenatal intervention, mother-baby dance and support for families of a premature baby are the key services we offer.

- you can confidently refer any woman who is struggling
- we respond quickly to referrals
- we keep you informed of outcomes
- we refer on where appropriate
- free research treatment when available

Under the new Medicare scheme for psychological services, we are now able to provide bulk billing to mothers who meet criteria for a mental disorder and are referred by a GP, psychiatrist or paediatrician. This applies to both individual and group services. There are no out of pocket expenses for mothers.



## Community HUGS

Community HUGS is a new research initiative from PIRI and the Infant Clinic. Based on our well-established Baby HUGS program, Community HUGS is a mother-baby playgroup especially developed for women who are in the process of recovering from postnatal depression. Its aim is to build on treatment already received for depression and focuses on enhancing the relationship between mother and baby. The playgroup is free of charge and consists of 10 structured sessions of 2hrs each. The main themes of the program include:

- Exploring new ways of managing infants, while looking after one's own needs;
- Facilitating positive interactions between parents and infants;
- Sharing observations and anxieties, in a supportive setting; and
- Experiencing fun, laughter in a positive, accepting atmosphere.

The development of this program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Local Answers grant. Community HUGS will be facilitated by maternal child health nurses in the Whittlesea and Nillumbik areas. Training of facilitators is provided. For more details contact Jennie Ericksen or Megan Andrew on 9496 4496.

## Models of Care Program

The Models of Care Program aims to evaluate three community-based treatment options for women with PND. This program has been running in the Banyule area since **November 2004**, with Whitehorse and Nillumbik areas having joined the program in **early 2006**. The three models of care being evaluated all incorporate GP-centred care, as follows:

- *Trained GP care only*
- *Trained GP care plus free counselling sessions with a trained MCHN*
- *Trained GP care plus free counselling sessions with a psychologist*

### **Results thus far:**

- **65 women** have been randomised to receive treatment for postnatal depression
- Of the **41 women** who have completed treatment, nearly all have significantly improved in terms of depression severity and levels of parenting stress. Those who required further treatment were offered additional services. For more information, contact Project Co-ordinator Chris Holt on 9496 4493.

## Welcome!

We are thrilled to welcome two new senior research officers to the PIRI team. Pictured right are Charlene Schembri (top) and Leanne Trinder. Charlene is primarily involved in the co-ordination of our 'Toward Parenthood' antenatal program currently run through the Northern and Angliss Hospitals. Leanne is responsible for our 'PremieStart: Beautiful Beginnings' program for parents and their newly-born premature babies in collaboration with the Mercy and Royal Women's Hospitals. Both Charlene and Leanne bring valuable skills to our team.



## A Letter of Thanks

The following letter is from a mother referred to the Infant Clinic for her depression and attended individual therapy.

"I am writing to thank you so very much for helping me through all my personal issues/problems at the Infant Clinic. Although I was a bit sceptical at the start, I can now say that I feel that you and the program were the best thing for me.

I didn't feel like I was being judged or looked down upon during my sessions, in fact I felt built up after most sessions and gained more confidence as time went by. You made me feel very comfortable to talk about anything in my life which can be very hard to do with close ones or people you know. I came to the clinic very confused about myself and had a lot of insecurities after the birth of my child. I can honestly say that after each one of my sessions I was able to put into practice different strategies and use different methods to change what I was thinking and doing to help myself.

I would recommend this program to anyone as I know that it can work if you really put your mind to it and believe you can change. I have the tools that I can use for the rest of my life."

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