



# E Moe, māmā: Maternal Sleep and Health in Aotearoa New Zealand Study

December 2009

Issue 1

**WELCOME** to the first edition of the *E moe, māmā* study newsletter. This newsletter will keep you updated on the progress of the *E moe māmā* study over the next three years.

The *E moe, māmā* study is being undertaken by the Sleep/Wake Research Centre, Massey University Wellington and is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand .

The *E moe, māmā* study aims to investigate how changes to sleep during pregnancy, and in the weeks after birth, affect women's health and well-being. This research will be fundamental in advancing understanding of the links between maternal sleep, birth outcomes and postnatal mental health.

Currently researchers at Massey University's Sleep/Wake Research Centre are inviting 1000 pregnant women (500 non-Maori, 500 Māori) in the lower North Island to participate in this project.

## **Pregnant women are welcome to enrol for the study if they:**

- Are over the age of 16 years
- Live in the Lower North Island (Hawkes Bay, Palmerston North/Mid-Central area, Kapiti Coast, Hutt Valley and Wellington)
- Are comfortable enough with English to complete written questionnaires
- Are only carrying one baby (not twins or multiples).

The research team are working with those involved in antenatal and postnatal care to identify women who might want to join the study.

For an information pack women can:

- Ask their midwife, lead maternity carer or child-birth educator or
- Contact the Sleep/Wake Research Centre directly:

**Free telephone: 0800 mumsleep**

**Free text: Text SLEEP to 5222**

**Email: [mumsleep@massey.ac.nz](mailto:mumsleep@massey.ac.nz)**

**Website: <http://sleepwake.massey.ac.nz>**

## **What is involved for women who join the study?**

- Complete a written questionnaire at between 35-37 weeks of pregnancy about sleep, lifestyle, their pregnancy and mood.
- Answer a few, short questions about sleep and mood by telephone when their baby is between 4-6 weeks old
- Complete a final written questionnaire when their baby is 12-weeks, which is very similar to the one completed in pregnancy, but with extra questions about their birth experience and their baby.

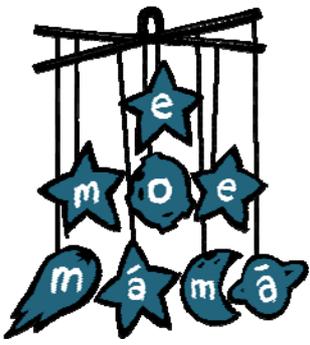
Each time a woman completes a written questionnaire she will receive a \$20 voucher.

Being in the study would take a total of about 1 to 1 and 1/2 hours (spread over four month period).

Participation is voluntary and women can withdraw at anytime. Information women provide will be treated as strictly confidential, only the research team will have access to it and no individual will be identified or made public as a part of this study.

All of the questionnaires can be completed in the woman's own time and own home. There is an 0800 telephone help desk for assistance to complete the questionnaires.

Translated versions of the *information sheet* and *consent form* are also available in Māori.



Maternal Sleep and Health in Aotearoa New Zealand



### Sleep and Postnatal mood changes

Advances have been made in understanding the links between sleep and mood but this is still a rapidly evolving area. A small number of studies have looked at the possible relationships between sleep disturbances during pregnancy and the postnatal period, and postnatal mood changes.

From the very beginning of pregnancy, women experience changes in the quality and quantity of their sleep. Once baby is born, fragmented sleep and sleep restriction are normal and often severe, but there is limited information on what is “normal” sleep loss during this timeframe and what is “extreme.” There are likely to be multiple factors that either help or hinder getting good sleep, yet there has been little research aimed at identifying these external factors, or the consequences of sleep loss for the health and well-being of pregnant women, new mothers or their families.

This research is not designed to measure the prevalence of postnatal depression. However, it will provide much needed information on the distribution of depressive symptoms during the antenatal and postnatal period in a large sample of women using a well validated screening tool. This research will also add to the limited existing information about sleep changes and mood disturbances for Māori women.

For more information and support on postnatal mood changes visit:

*Mothers Matter:* [www.mothersmatter.co.nz](http://www.mothersmatter.co.nz)

*Post and Ante-Natal Distress Support Group:* [www.pnd.org.nz](http://www.pnd.org.nz)

### Outcome measures for the study

- In the first phase of the study, relationships will be explored between sleep changes during pregnancy, type of birth and the duration of labour.
- In the second phase (conducted in the postnatal period) information about changes to sleep in pregnancy will be combined with information about sleep after birth and the relationship to postnatal mood changes .

Information from this study will be fundamental in advancing knowledge on the role of sleep duration and quality in influencing birth and the occurrence of postnatal depression for both Māori and non-Māori women.

*The E Moe, māmā Research Team wishes you all a safe and Happy Christmas and New Year.*



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### What this study means for those working in antenatal and postnatal care.

The research team is asking all midwives, birth educators and interested health professionals in the Wellington, Hutt Valley, Wairarapa, Whanganui, Mid-central and Hawkes Bay regions to help them identify women to participate in the study over the course of the next 12-18 months.

Those who choose to assist will be supplied with information packs and a sheet to track the packs. At a routine visit or class (preferably after 20 weeks gestation) we ask you to simply mention the study to women and offer them an information pack to take away.

There is no onus on health professionals to answer questions about the study or help complete questionnaires .

There is an 0800 number for women to call with any questions or concerns. The information pack contains a cover letter, information sheet, consent form and first questionnaire (also available in Māori except the first questionnaire).

If you are interested or want to know more about the study please contact the research team on 0800 mumsleep.



SLEEP-WAKE research centre  
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