

# 2000 stories

The Victorian Adolescent Health Cohort Study

Newsletter | Summer 09/10

Keeping in  
contact with you

Your involvement in this study is extremely important to us. You are irreplaceable in the project, and that's why we make every effort to keep your contact information up-to-date.

To make updating your details easier for you, we have developed a new automated system that sends you personalized emails approximately once every six months. A unique hyperlink is contained within the email. This connects you to a secure form which prompts you to electronically update your contact details and to let us know if you or your partner are pregnant, or have recently had a baby.

For the majority of you who are not expecting children now, in the future, or at all, we ask for your patience and support during this process. Keeping your contact details up to date is still very important to us, so that we can ask for your involvement in the next stage of the project!

## What's coming up?

Some of you may have been wondering where we are hoping to go next with the cohort. It sounds incredible, but 18 years have gone by since you first joined the study back in 1992. We are hoping to come back to talk to you all again on the 20th anniversary of the study in a couple of years' time. You will all have been through amazing events in those 20 years, and we are keen to know where life has taken you. We know that the mid 30's is a time of continuing change whether this be in work, families, relationships or health. It is in fact a time when many people adopt healthier lifestyles, and have greater well-being than at any point in the previous 20 years. That will be the focus of the next wave of interviews.

We want to understand more about these transitions into health and good emotional adjustment, and how they come about.

We would like to thank you all for your continued involvement in the 2000 stories study. It's now 18 years since the study began, and we are still publishing many important research findings from the information that you have given us.

## What's happening at the moment?

### 2000 stories: The next generation

Over the past 3 years many of you have become involved in "the next generation" phase of the study, examining health and wellbeing across generations. The aim of this study is to try to understand patterns of health and ill health across generations. First off, we are looking at post-natal depression, sleeping and feeding problems in babies, and premature birth. This study will also tell us much about the struggles and demands on today's parents. To the best of our knowledge, this is the only study anywhere in the world attempting to identify what preconception factors may predict these early life outcomes.

We would like to thank all of you who have participated. In particular, we would like to extend a warm welcome to the partners of our participants who have agreed to give their time and share their experiences with us. Thank you for the time you have taken to answer our questions – we understand how tricky this can be at such a busy time, particularly when caring for young children. So far, we have identified 515 children to participants within the study, and we are delighted that so many of you have been willing to join this new exciting phase of the project.

**\$100**  
**Gift**  
**Vouchers**

Congratulations to the four winners of the \$100 gift vouchers: Wendy, Patricia, Justin and Callum. Thanks to all who updated their details on the online form!

# Research roundup: 2000 stories and the centre for adolescent health

One of the strengths of this study lies in the fact that so many of you have continued to answer our surveys at each round of interviews. This means that the results of our research can have a significant impact on adolescent research and on future government policy.

2009 has been an exciting year for the 2000 stories study and The Centre for Adolescent Health, with your input helping us to publish more important results. We've included some information on three of these below, and in the coming months will be putting further information on our website. Stay tuned!

## Assessing alcohol guidelines in Australian teenagers

### What did we look at?

Whether drinking any amount of alcohol as a teenager increases the chances of having drinking problems as a young adult.

### What did we find?

- Adolescents who drank any alcohol were more likely to have drinking problems at age 24, than adolescents who didn't drink alcohol.
- This relationship was stronger for males than females. The more boys drank as teenagers, the more likely they were to develop drinking problems by age 24.
- Even teenagers with 'low-risk' levels of drinking (as defined by the National Health and Medical Research Council) were more likely to develop alcohol-related problems than teenagers who didn't drink alcohol at all.

### What does this mean?

These findings suggest that even drinking small amounts of alcohol as a teenager can increase chances of alcohol problems later in life. These results are important, because it was previously thought that moderate levels of teenage alcohol consumption were ok.

Moore E, Coffey C, Carlin JB, Alati R, Patton GC. Assessing alcohol guidelines in teenagers: results from a 10-year prospective study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 33 (2) : 154 - 9 (2009)

## Global Patterns of Mortality in Young People

### What did we look at?

2000 stories Project Director Professor George Patton was invited by the World Health Organization to lead a team reporting on global patterns of mortality in young people.

### What did we find?

- There has been an "...extraordinary reduction in mortality in earlier childhood but less so in adolescence and young adulthood" (from *The Australian*, September 12th, 2009).
- Currently, Australians aged 20-24 are about 4 times more likely to die than an adolescent or younger child.
- Many deaths in the 10-24 year group are preventable.

### What does this mean?

The National Agenda for Early Childhood is currently focussed on babies and youngsters under five. Professor Patton argued that although these should remain a priority, these study results show that more focus needs to be placed on the 10-24 year group.

Patton GC, Coffey C, Sawyer SM, Viner RM, Haller DM, Bose K, Vos T, Ferguson J, Mathers CD. Global patterns of mortality in young people: a systematic analysis of population health data. *Lancet* 374 (9693) : 881 - 92 (2009)

## The link between regular cannabis use in adolescence and regular dependent use in young adulthood

### What did we look at?

Together with the National Drug and Research Centre (Sydney, NSW), we looked at whether teenage cannabis use is related to regular and dependent cannabis use in young adulthood.

### What did we find?

- Teenagers who used cannabis weekly were most likely to be either regular or dependent cannabis users as young adults.
- Regular teenage cannabis users who had 'breaks' from using cannabis now and then were less likely to be regular/dependent users as young adults.
- Regular teenage cannabis users who either used cannabis weekly with no breaks, or who 'cut down' their use now and then without having complete breaks, were more likely to be regular/dependent users as young adults.

### What does this mean?

These results suggest that it's better for teenagers who use cannabis to have breaks now and then than to continue their use but cut down the amount. It also suggests that preventing use in the teenage years is also important.

Swift W, Coffey C, Carlin JB, Degenhardt L, Calabria B, Patton GC. Are adolescents who moderate their cannabis use at lower risk of later regular and dependent cannabis use?. *Addiction* 104 (5) : 806 - 14 (2009)

## The website: Updated and more to come

Our website has just been updated. You can find us at: <http://www.mcri.edu.au/2000stories>. We are working on adding a section containing a 2000 stories bibliography of all papers published based on the data from the study. A reference of national and international presentations will also be available. We will also add a section that will document the impact of our research within the media.

## Contact us

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, why not drop us a line?  
You can contact us on

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