Media Release
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Lismore researchers receive funding boost to help pregnant women quit smoking

It was announced today that a team of researchers from the University Centre for Rural Health (UCRHR), led by Associate Professor Megan Passey, has been awarded $1,035,000 by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to help improve support to pregnant women to quit smoking.

The team is collaborating with the Northern NSW Local Health District, four other Local Health Districts, the Ministry of Health, the Cancer Institute NSW, the NSW Cancer Council and colleagues from the University of Newcastle.

Smoking is the single most important preventable cause of adverse pregnancy outcomes, including stillbirth, preterm birth and low birth weight. These harms are reduced if women stop smoking during pregnancy. Many pregnant women are motivated to quit but face significant challenges including a lack of effective support from health professionals.

The project will trial an innovative, evidence-based program – MOHMQuit (Midwives and Obstetricians Helping Mothers to Quit). MOHMQuit is a multi-component program designed to help managers and clinicians to better support pregnant smokers to quit. It takes a whole-of-system approach and includes system-, manager- and clinician-focused elements and was developed collaboratively with project partners. The project will implement MOHMQuit in eight public hospitals providing antenatal care across NSW and test whether it is successful in helping mums to quit.

Dr Passey said “This is a wonderful opportunity for our region and for pregnant women and families across NSW, as we’ll now be able to help reduce the harms from smoking. This builds on six years of work we’ve been doing with Clinical Midwifery Consultant, Cathy Adams, and others at the Northern NSW Local Health District, and it’s great to see this partnership enter another phase.”

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