

Best minds frame research priorities for reproductive health

January 19 2016

Research into the optimal preconception diet and societal barriers to fertility are among the key priorities for future reproductive health studies, according to a highly experienced multidisciplinary team of health thinkers assembled by the University of Adelaide's Robinson Research Institute.

In a new paper published in the journal *Nutrients*, University of Adelaide's NHMRC Principal Research Fellow, Professor Ray Rodgers, convened a group of dozens of clinicians, health practitioners, researchers and government representatives in an effort to assess current fertility research, and identify questions and additional information needed by those working in the field of reproductive health.

"Optimising preconception care is recognised as a critical health priority with regards to improving fertility and maternal obstetric outcomes, and fetal, infant and potentially adult [health](#)," says Professor Rodgers.

"A team of 33 of the best minds in [reproductive health](#) got together to discuss areas of fertility and conception that require more research attention in the future.

"The multidisciplinary team identified topics that fell into three categories: lifestyle-related, societal and [biological factors](#).

"The lifestyle factors included nutrition and diet, exercise, obesity and shift work; the societal factors included cultural and ethical issues, social

disadvantage, government and educational policies; and biological factors refer to the physical states of individuals that influence fertility outcomes, which are predominately written about in academic papers and not readily accessible to the general public," he says.

Professor Rodgers says of the identified factors, issues surrounding the optimal preconception diet and societal barriers were highlighted as particularly important.

"There is an increasing body of research examining the effect of preconception nutrition on fertility, pregnancy and child outcomes," says Professor Rodgers.

"Factors including lower dietary glycaemic load, lower animal protein, improved fatty acid profile (decreased trans or saturated fats and increased omega-3 intake) and greater adherence to a Mediterranean-type dietary pattern were associated with a lower risk of conception issues. However, there are still many gaps in our understanding of how maternal diet impacts the development of a child.

"Lack of access to medical care, high rates of infection, psychosocial stress, poor housing and substance abuse, are issues that can impact the fertility of women of low socioeconomic status, and those living in remote areas," he says. "It was also identified that such women needed to be better represented in reproduction research."

Robinson Research Institute Director, Professor Sarah Robertson, says the valuable information gathered by the multidisciplinary team will help inform collaborations and research endeavours for the Institute.

"This workshop was a highly valuable exercise as we now have a clear framework which will influence how we allocate research resources in 2016," says Professor Robertson.

"It also identified many opportunities for the University of Adelaide's Robinson Research Institute to forge new partnerships with like-minded organisations and groups of professionals," she says.

More information: Lisa Moran et al. Research Priorities for Fertility and Conception Research as Identified by Multidisciplinary Health Care Practitioners and Researchers, *Nutrients* (2016). [DOI: 10.3390/nu8010035](https://doi.org/10.3390/nu8010035)

Provided by University of Adelaide

Citation: Best minds frame research priorities for reproductive health (2016, January 19) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-01-minds-priorities-reproductive-health.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.