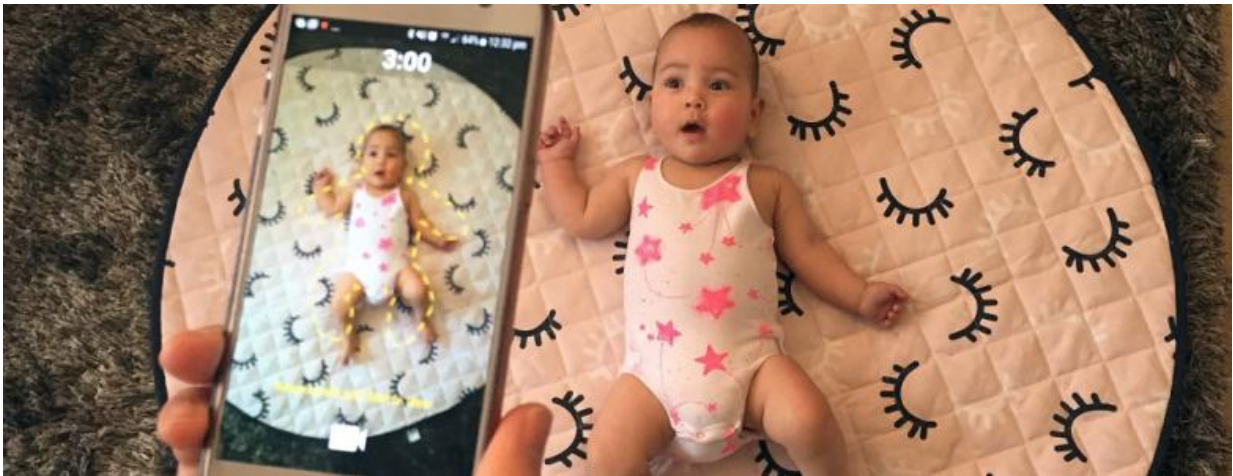


Trial of innovative app to screen for cerebral palsy

September 12 2017



Credit: Murdoch Childrens Research Institute

An app developed by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Women's Hospital, and the University of Melbourne could revolutionise the way cerebral palsy is diagnosed and the timing of treatment.

The screening app has been offered, as part of a trial, to all Victorian parents who gave birth to a extremely preterm baby in the year to April 2017. Very small, [preterm babies](#) are at higher risk of developing [cerebral palsy](#).

Currently the average age for diagnosis of cerebral palsy in babies is 19

months, but that is often much later than ideal for maximising the benefit of [treatment](#).

The simple app, called Baby Moves, allows parents to record their baby's movements at home at three months of age, upload the video to a secure server and a trained assessor watches the video to screen the baby for cerebral palsy.

Physiotherapist Assoc Prof Alicia Spittle from the Women's, Murdoch Children's Research Institute and University of Melbourne has led the development of the app.

"We wanted to ensure families that didn't have access to an assessment team early in the baby's development, particularly those in rural areas, could easily have their baby checked for cerebral palsy. We also wanted to bring down the age at which the average child is diagnosed," she said.

"It is really important that [babies](#) receive treatment early so that we can harness the neuroplasticity of the developing brain. At the moment, the average baby is diagnosed at 19 months which is not ideal to gain the most from treatment," Assoc Prof Spittle said.

"Most families are aware that their baby is having problems early in their development, but parents are often advised to wait until milestones, such as walking, are missed before being referred for an assessment and accessing treatment. This app makes it easy for [parents](#) to access that assessment early in their baby's development."

Provided by Murdoch Childrens Research Institute

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