

# The ON TRACK Network

March 2017

Newsletter  
Edition 8



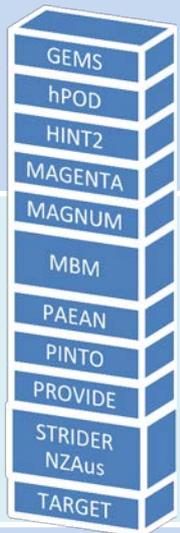
## What's In This Issue?

- ON TRACK News
- OTN Trial Development Workshop
- Feature Site: Middlemore Hospital
- Update Your Practice: Mid-Childhood Outcomes of Repeat Antenatal Corticosteroids

Welcome to the March Edition of the ON TRACK Network. This month we tell you about the ON TRACK Trial Development Workshop which took place in February and profile Middlemore Hospital- our site of the month. Please contact us if we can support research at your site or for any questions about the network.

## ON TRACK News

- We have sadly said goodbye to our network administrator **Ella Baker**, she has done an amazing job over the last 9 months. She is off to study medicine so we hope will back to clinical trials research in the future. **Peter Melville** will taking up the role in April.
- The **STRIDER NZAus** trial has completed recruitment!
- Congratulations to Auckland City Hospital - 150<sup>th</sup> **MAGENTA** baby!



## The ON TRACK Trial Development Workshop

This inaugural workshop took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> February with 64 registrants from around the country. Our aim was to develop promising concepts for clinical trials in maternal & perinatal health into collaborative, multicentre proposals suitable for submission for competitive grant funding.

With the guidance of our expert facilitators including; biostatisticians Greg Gamble & Thomas Lumley; consumer representative Kelly Thompson; Māori research advisor Helen Wihongi; international trial experts Jonathan Morris (Sydney), Vicki Flenady (Brisbane) & Lucille Sebastian (Sydney); & local trialists Colin McArthur, Cliona Ni Mhurchu, Sally Merry, Ian Reid, Lesley McCowan & John Kolbe, seven trial concepts were developed over the two day workshop.

Participant feedback has been very positive with many requesting that the workshop be an annual event.

*"Thank you so much for the privilege of attending. The camaraderie and compassion demonstrated amongst the academic researchers and clinicians, whilst developing and refining research concepts was an admirable and remarkable experience."*

*"Thank you for the opportunity to be included in this Workshop. Whilst out of my comfort zone on occasion, I feel extremely privileged to have been surrounded by a group of people who are not only experts in their field, but show incredible passion and enthusiasm."*

Thank you to all who came along and contributed.

# The ON TRACK Network



## Introducing... Counties Manukau DHB & Middlemore Hospital



Paula Massey, a research nurse in NICU, and Michael Meyer, a senior neonatologist, make up the local ON TRACK Network team at Counties Manukau. They have kindly answered a few questions for us.

**Tell us a little bit about the services offered at Counties Manukau DHB?** We have 8000 births per year at 3 primary birthing units at Botany Downs, Papakura and Pukekohe as well as births at Middlemore Hospital. We have a Level 3 neonatal unit with  $\pm$  800 admissions per year. The population within Counties Manukau has a high proportion of low income families including 1/3 of the most deprived in NZ. In 2015, 61% of our population were overweight or obese and 21% were smokers.

**Which large multicentre clinical trials are running at Middlemore Hospital at the moment?** **GEMS, PAEAN, TARGET, HINT-2, DIAMOND, PROVIDE, Novavax:** RSV Maternal and **MedImmune:** RSV Preterm. We plan to start more soon.

**Are you running trials of your own as well?** Yes we are. The **Humba Trial** is exploring interventions for maternal obesity, the **ABC Study** is a trial for babies born  $<31$  weeks assessing the effect of breathing support during delayed cord clamping and the **CHiPS Study** is a randomised control trial comparing methods for weaning ventilation (HHFNC versus CPAP).

**What are your local barriers to participation in clinical research?** Increasing staff clinical workload, participant follow-up due to patient demographics and the lack of a fully fledged research culture.

**How important do you feel on-going research is for clinical practice and why?** It is essential to continue to increase knowledge and evidence based practice. This will lead to improved patient safety and better outcomes.

**Give us a couple of 'Top Tips' for recruitment or research in general?** A multidisciplinary approach and collaboration is essential, including Industry, Lab, Obstetrics, Gynaecology and the Paediatric service. Maintaining good clinical practice and providing information that can be easily understood is vital for successful recruitment and research in general.



Thanks Paula and Mike



### Update Your Practice

**Objective:** To assess if exposure to repeat dose(s) of antenatal corticosteroids has beneficial effects on neurodevelopment & general health at 6 to 8 years of age.

**Methods:** Women at risk for very preterm birth, who had received a course of corticosteroids  $\geq 7$  days previously, were randomised to intramuscular betamethasone or saline placebo, repeated weekly if risk of very preterm birth remained (ACTORDS trial). Childhood assessments at age 6-8 years included neurocognitive function, behaviour, growth, lung function, blood pressure, health-related quality of life & health service utilisation. The primary outcome was survival free of neurosensory disability.

**Results:** 91% of children were followed up. The rate of survival free of neurosensory disability was similar in both groups (78% vs 77%). Neurodevelopment, including cognitive function and behaviour, body size, blood pressure, spirometry & health related quality of life were similar in both groups, as was use of health services.

#### What does this mean?

- Treatment with repeat dose(s) of antenatal corticosteroids was associated with neither benefit nor harm in mid-childhood.
- This finding of long-term safety supports the use of repeat dose(s) of antenatal corticosteroids, in view of the related *neonatal benefits*.
- For women at continued risk of preterm birth before 32 weeks gestation,  $\geq 7$  days after an initial course of antenatal corticosteroids, clinicians could consider using a single injection of betamethasone, repeated weekly if risk remains.

**Find the article here:** <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/09/17/peds.2016->

### Mid-Childhood Outcomes of Repeat Antenatal Corticosteroids: A Randomized Controlled Trial

Caroline A. Crowther, MD,<sup>a,b</sup> Peter J. Anderson, PhD,<sup>c,d</sup> Christopher J.D. McKinlay, PhD,<sup>a</sup> Jane E. Harding, DPhil,<sup>a</sup> Pat J. Ashwood, BSc(Hons),<sup>b</sup> Ross R. Haslam, MBBS,<sup>a</sup> Jeffery S. Robinson, MD,<sup>b</sup> Lex W. Doyle, MD,<sup>c,d,f</sup> for the ACTORDS Follow-up Group

We know repeat doses of corticosteroids before very preterm birth reduces neonatal respiratory morbidity & serious outcomes in the newborn period but what are the effects in childhood? This recently published follow-up study of a RCT answers the question & provides important information for us to consider as we counsel patients about antenatal corticosteroids.