



PROJECT SUMMARY FORM

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| Project Title | Medication management during lactation |
| Supervisor name | Dr Alison Shield, Dr Lynn Cheong, Dr Marjorie Atchan, Prof. Deborah Davis |
| CHS/ACTHD position | Prof. Deborah Davis (employed by ACTHD) |
| Address | School of Health Sciences Faculty of Health University of Canberra 11 Kirinari Street, Bruce, ACT 2617 |
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Lead discipline (please select one)

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing and Midwifery | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Economics |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allied Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Biostatistics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Epidemiology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-clinical | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Does this project involve research led by, or relating to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders?

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
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Outline of the project (250 words max)

The health benefits of exclusive breastfeeding to around 6 months is well recognized for both the infant and mother. While breastfeeding initiation rates are high (>90%) in Australia, this rapidly declines with only 61% of infants exclusively breastfed to at least 4 months. Many factors impact a woman's choice to breastfeed or continue to breastfeed; commencing medication can be a contributor to breastfeeding discontinuation.

Health professionals play a pivotal role in providing support and services to women who are breastfeeding; this includes the promotion of safe use of medications during lactation. The most common reason for health professionals to discourage breastfeeding by women who need medication is the assumption that medication use will pose a risk to the infant even though most medications are compatible with breastfeeding. This assumption can be compounded by the lack of high-quality evidence regarding the safety of individual medicines to the breastfed infant and may lead to an overly conservative approach towards the use of drugs during lactation.

To better understand decision making processes by women who need medications during lactation, a survey was administered to women who were lactating to determine their information seeking behaviours about medicines safety. The student will have the opportunity to analyse this pre-existing survey data and prepare a manuscript of the

findings for publication.

Proposed research methods

The analysis will consist of two parts: 1) quantitative analysis of limited choice questions and 2) thematic analysis of open text fields investigating information seeking behaviour, knowledge about medicines safety during lactation, information provision and confidence in the provision of medicines safety information during lactation.

Preferred study discipline being undertaken by the student

Pharmacy, Midwifery, Medicine

Benefits to the student and to the department

This research project will develop knowledge around the important topic of medication management in lactation; it is hoped this will raise awareness about how to avoid medication use becoming a barrier to breastfeeding. The student will gain invaluable experience in data analysis and the preparation of a manuscript for publication which will prepare them for future research work as well as enable them to interpret research findings in their clinical practice. This research project aligns with the work of the University of Canberra research area *Brighter Beginnings* (of which three supervisors are core members) which has a focus on maternal and child health and will add an important research topic to the project folio of the research area.

How does this project align with any or all of the three strategic objectives of *Better Together: A strategic plan for research in the ACT health system* (100w max)

[Better together - A strategic plan for research in the ACT health system 2022–2030](#)

This project aligns with the ACT Health strategic Objective 2: ACT people have capacity to undertake high value research in the health system. This project will provide a health student with research training which is likely to result in an increased understanding and confidence in the reading and implementation of health literature by that individual in the future which is likely to result in the improved delivery of healthcare. The student will have multi-disciplinary supervision (pharmacy and midwifery) and will learn skills necessary to perform data analysis, synthesis and manuscript production in the future.

ACTHD/CHS Department where the student will be based

SYNERGY: Nursing & Midwifery Research Centre
University of Canberra and ACT Health

Will the student be in a patient facing role at any time during the project?

No

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Will the student require access to CHS and/or ACTHD network / DHR / applications / database? If yes, please identify

No

Will the student require CHS / ACT Health building access? If yes, please identify

No

Supervisor availability across key dates

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|---|---|
| Friday 10 Nov – Preplacement presentation session, Canberra Hospital Auditorium <i>Approximate duration 9am-12pm – supervisors are not required for full session. Possible Webex option.</i> | Yes |
| Placement period 10 Nov – 9 Feb Please indicate availability across this time. <i>E.g. leave over Christmas/New Year</i> | At least one supervisor will be available across this time period with the exception of the week between Christmas/New Year |
| At least two face-to-face sessions with the student each week during their 6-week placement. | Yes |
| Friday 9 Feb – Final presentation session, Canberra Hospital Auditorium <i>Approximate duration 9am-1pm – supervisors are not required for full session. Possible Webex option.</i> | Yes |

x I have read and I agree to the [ACT Health privacy policy](#) which includes statements on how the ACT Health Directorate acts lawfully to collect and use data to report on activities and to plan for future events and initiatives; including that we may use your details to contact you if required for program delivery and/or evaluation and to inform you of future similar opportunities.

Please submit form to health.research@act.gov.au