Evaluation of evidence-based maternity care in remote communities of far west New South Wales

Emma Quinn¹², Jacqueline Noble³, Holly Seale², Mike Hill³, Jeanette Ward³
¹NSW Public Health Officer Training Program, NSW Ministry of Health, ²School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, ³The Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern Section, Broken Hill, NSW

Introduction: Over the last decade, there has been continuing concern about the need to address the inequity about the number and availability of birthing services and the sustainability of the maternity workforce in rural and remote areas of Australia. In Far West NSW, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that not all women receive continuity of care across organisational partnerships and that clinicians find it difficult to consistently implement evidence-based care due to challenging organisational, economic and workforce factors, outside the control of single organisations in a shared care model. With the 2009 announcement from the Australian government about the maternity care reforms and the increasing evidence of the safety and effectiveness of non-medical models of care; perhaps it is time for real change?

Aim: The project aims to identify any issues in providing evidence-based care in Far West NSW and identifying facilitators that will potentially enable midwifery-led models of care to be provided as an option in our rural and remote context.

Methods: A purposive sample of key clinicians who provide maternity care in Far West NSW (n=~20-30) will be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The interviews will collect information on: the current gaps in delivering evidence-based maternity care; and potential barriers and enablers to delivering midwifery-led models of care and other evidence-based services in Far West NSW. Ethical approval for the project has been obtained from the UNSW HREA panel. Interviews will be conducted in November and December this year. The interview data will be recorded, cleaned and coded in Excel and imported into SAS for further statistical analysis. Frequencies and descriptive statistics will be calculated and multiple regression analysis performed on selected outcomes.

Results and conclusions: These results will be used by the Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern section to inform further policy and service development with local partners in Far West NSW.