

# ON TRACK Network Forum for Women & Whānau



ON TRACK NETWORK  
BETTER HEALTH FOR MOTHERS AND BABIES  
Te Awhi Rito

## Te Awhi Rito

Better Health for Mothers and Babies



**Kia ora**, welcome to the ON TRACK Network Forum for Women & Whānau newsletter. The ON TRACK Network is a New Zealand-wide clinical trials network. We connect with people from across the whole country who are interested in clinical trials research that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of mums and babies. This includes midwives, obstetricians, neonatologists, nurses, researchers, hospital managers, funding agencies, policy-makers, **and most importantly, consumers – the mums and babies we do the research for.** We produce this quarterly newsletter for you, but to make our Forum easily accessible to everyone, most of our activity runs through our Facebook page. Please take a look and join in: [www.facebook.com/ontracknetwork](http://www.facebook.com/ontracknetwork)

### Ways to be involved

Like our **Forum's Facebook page** and become part of the conversation.

Join our Forum's **contact list.**

Attend our annual **Trial Development Workshops.**

Contribute to our **newsletter** by emailing us.

Follow us on **Twitter @ONTRACKNetwork1.**

Join our **Research Prioritisation Project** and tell us what is important to you.

Watch out on our Facebook page for invites to join specific projects.

**Contact us at any time:**  
[ontracknetwork@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ontracknetwork@auckland.ac.nz)

### Share Your Story!

**Do you have a clinical trial story to share? We would love to hear from you.** You can email us: [ontracknetwork@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ontracknetwork@auckland.ac.nz) Or, join us on Facebook:

[@ontracknetwork](https://www.facebook.com/ontracknetwork)



### Why I participate in clinical trials

**Billie Jones is a proud mum who has participated in a couple of clinical trials while pregnant. Here she tells us of her experience and explains why as a mum she was motivated to get involved in research.**

"Back in 2016, when I was child-free and without a single grey hair, I was scrolling through Facebook and a sponsored post popped up looking for

pregnant women to be involved in the NIPPER trial. It was asking for volunteers to take a supplementary drink during pregnancy (including pregnancy vitamins and some additional supplements). It seemed very beneficial, so I had a chat with my husband, we registered our interest and our participation in research went from there.

Given New Zealand's relatively small size, I've always been impressed at what we've contributed to globally for the health and wellbeing of babies. For example, look at the New Zealand cot death study in the 1980's, which resulted in changes to baby sleeping habits internationally. So, when I saw the opportunity to contribute to research, I really felt compelled to be part of it.

With my first son, Archer, we had several appointments throughout the pregnancy where my bloods were checked, and we had additional scans. Being my first pregnancy, this was all very reassuring. When I became pregnant with my second son, Beau, I received some information in the mail regarding studies that were currently running from the Liggins Institute at the University of Auckland. I had a follow up phone call from one of the research midwives and we discussed the C\*STEROID Feasibility Study. Although by this point, I felt as though I knew and trusted the research team, I still ran this past my obstetrician who was extremely supportive of me being involved. To have the approval of an independent medical professional is always reassuring.

*"I'm proud that my two boys have been able to contribute. By participating in research my whānau has contributed to improving the lives of mums, and to saving the lives of future babies."*



The C\*STEROID Feasibility Study was a lot less time consuming than the NIPPER study, consisting of only two appointments just before birth. However, we still felt we benefited from the additional care we received by being involved in research. Following Beau's birth, we were visited by research midwives to take his blood sugar levels. It was picked up that he was slightly hypoglycaemic (a low blood sugar level), which he probably wouldn't have been tested for outside of the study. But even more importantly, our research midwife picked up that Beau was struggling with his breathing and rallied the hospital staff to get Beau transferred to NICU for the additional care he needed. I really can't express how grateful I am to have had her there to help Beau when he needed it. Being involved in a clinical trial not only gives you the altruistic feeling of doing something for the greater good, but also (more selfishly) gives you additional checks and monitoring which you might not get otherwise. Pregnancy and childbirth can be a stressful time, and if you're a natural worrier like I am, having an additional set of eyes monitoring your little one can be a great comfort."



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## What research questions should we be asking to achieve better health for New Zealand mothers and babies?



**Please consider taking part in this valuable opportunity, we would love to hear from you!**

We want to make sure that we ask the right questions in our future research so we are conducting a national study to identify the research most urgently needed to improve health and healthcare for mothers and babies in New Zealand.

One of the first steps is to identify what we do not know yet. These are called knowledge gaps which are gaps in our understanding that need to be filled by new research. We would love your help to identify our current knowledge gaps.

**This is the perfect opportunity to highlight what questions in mothers and babies health you would like to see answered by research.**

If you participate, you may also win one of ten \$25 prezy cards. Please take just 10-20 minutes of your time to complete our on-line anonymous questionnaire. The questionnaire is open for 3 months starting from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

Follow the link below to read participant information and access the questionnaire:

<http://bit.ly/ontrack2020>

If you would prefer to chat over phone or video-call, please contact Clara Mossinger (pictured right), midwife and PhD student at the Liggins Institute, University of Auckland. She will arrange with you a time that is convenient for you to talk with her. Contact Clara:

E-mail - [c.mossinger@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:c.mossinger@auckland.ac.nz) or Phone - 022 4311 988

We really look forward to hearing from you!



### New Zealand Research: Little Eye Drops Study

Babies that are born very early and very small are at risk of a condition called retinopathy of prematurity or 'ROP'. This causes abnormal blood vessels to grow in the eye. These vessels tend to leak or bleed, leading to scarring of the retina, a layer of nerve tissue in the eye that lets us see. This means babies with ROP are at risk of becoming blind. ROP has no signs or symptoms when it first develops but if it is detected early it can be treated. The only way to detect it is by careful examination of the eyes. This is done by a neonatal ophthalmologist, a specialist doctor who cares for newborn babies eyes. Because of the risk of blindness, premature babies have regular ROP eye examinations.

To be able to look at a baby's retina, special eye drops are used to dilate the baby's pupil. The **Little Eye Drops Study** aims to find out what is the best dose of eye drops to safely use in premature infants. We know that in New Zealand and Australia, there is a wide variety of eye drops and doses used for these eye examinations. It is possible some doses maybe higher than they need to be and that lower doses are just as good. In the study, two different types of eye drops at specific doses are being compared. This will give us really important information because eye drops used to examine premature babies have been associated with adverse effects on babies hearts, lungs and bowel. This research will find out whether we can use the lower dose of eye drops and still get good views of babies' eyes.

The study will include babies from **Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin** and **Invercargill** hospitals. The research team at Otago University plan to recruit 150 babies into the study. More details of the study are available online:

[https:// www.anzctr.org.au/](https://www.anzctr.org.au/) (search registration number: ACTRN12619000795190).



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