

WA Pregnancy Cohort (The Raine Study)

The Raine Study 11th Annual Scientific Meeting

Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia

Friday, 30th November 2018

I am delighted to be here as your Patron and thank you for your welcome.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

I extend a very warm welcome to guests from interstate who are joining colleagues for this annual scientific meeting. I hope you enjoy your stay in our wonderful city.

The Raine Study is a truly remarkable and unique West Australian resource. It is one of the largest multi-generational cohorts of pregnancy, childhood, adolescence and now early adulthood to be conducted anywhere in the world.

Its design is to improve human health and well-being by determining how events during pregnancy and childhood influence development throughout life. Amazingly, it has done this by tracking the health and development of 2868 West Australian babies and their families for more than a quarter of a century. It is now well recognised as the longest of only a handful of successful lifecycle studies in the world.

The outcomes have been extraordinary. It has become clear that both genes and the environment of mother, baby, child and adolescent are key contributors to diseases and conditions that account for approximately one third of the global burden of disease in both developed and developing countries. As well, the extensive data resource is helping to unravel the complex interaction of multiple factors in people's health over their lifetimes.

We know that the future success of the study is vital to ongoing research and health improvement efforts for current and future generations worldwide.

All this, of course, stems from one woman's legacy; the well-known Perth business woman, the late Mary Raine, whose estate funded the University of Western Australia's Raine Medical Research Foundation. Just as she instructed, the impact of her generous gift continues through the research findings and discoveries being made.

The story of the study began 29 years ago when a group of prominent West Australian researchers, Professors John Newnham, Fiona Stanley, Lou Landau and Con Michael, established a cohort of children to determine how events during pregnancy and childhood influence health in later life.

Their ability to convince nearly three thousand pregnant mothers to join the study was a remarkable achievement. Equally remarkable has been the continued commitment of these mothers, their partners and their children who have voluntarily participated in regular assessments. One of these is my predecessor, former

Governor Kerry Sanderson, who was a ‘Raine mother’ and one of her sons, part of the ‘Raine Cohort’, who continues to participate.

They do so because they know that their contribution will help make a difference to improving human health. And what a contribution they have made – more than 30,000 pieces of data have been collected on each of them, with more than 500 peer-reviewed journal articles published on the study’s resources, a milestone only reached a month ago.

It is an impressive and precious commitment and I commend their very generous gift of giving to the study in this way for all these years.

Significantly, the Raine Cohort are now having their own children, and I understand there are about 400 babies whose information is being collected since last year. During the next decade that figure is expected to grow to an estimated 1500 babies. This will undoubtedly provide a further extraordinary opportunity to study human health across multiple generations.

As well, the study is now involving grandparents with a study on breast density, making this a first with active participation across four generations.

I am very pleased to note, too, that there is now involvement of all five of the West Australian universities and several of the research institutes. The support they provide, both academically and financially, has enabled the continuation of a rich resource.

WA is a world leader in health and medical research and collaboration such as this continues to make our international standing stronger. This is also true for the Raine Study as its reach continues to grow with contributions to many international research studies.

There are clearly exciting times ahead for the study. Today’s meeting provides the opportunity to reflect on its ground breaking research and discoveries to date, as well as to make plans for the future, including next year’s 30th anniversary.

I think you are going to have an inspiring and fruitful day ahead. I am pleased to now officially open your meeting and wish you all the very best in your deliberations.