

Understanding preconception health needs in the Australian population – a retrospective population study

Joyce Xiao MBBS * ^{1,2}, Shruthi Patlori², Jacqueline Boyle MBBS PhD FRANZCOG^{1,2,3}, Penelope Sheehan MBBS FRANZCOG ^{1,4,5}, Asvini K Subasinghe BA BSc(Hons) PhD ^{1,2,3}
¹ Eastern Health, Melbourne, Australia, ² Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, ³ Preconception Health Network, ⁴ University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia, ⁴ Safer Care Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
 *Presenting author

Objective: While global and national guidelines on preconception health exist, it remains unclear whether Australian women receive adequate information to address their pre-pregnancy needs. We investigated preconception health behaviours among women of reproductive age attending antenatal care at Box Hill Maternity Hospital, Victoria, in 2024. The aim was to understand current pre-pregnancy demographic information, health practices and identify gaps to inform future health promotion interventions.

Study design: This retrospective population study formed part of a three-phase pilot project aimed at designing an inter-conception health tool. The study received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (LR24-008-105758).

Methods: 314 participants were randomly selected in 2024, and their antenatal data were collected from the Birthing Outcomes System (BOS) at Box Hill Hospital, a level 5 Victorian maternity service. Data were de-identified and analysed with STATA SE 18.

Results:

