

THE ORIGINS PROJECT: HEALTH, WELLBEING, ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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RAMSAY SITE: Joondalup Health Campus

BACKGROUND

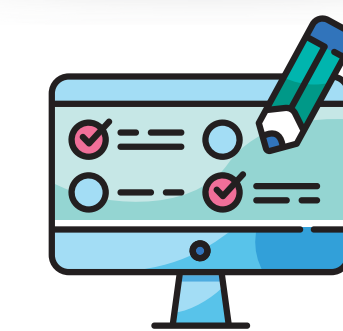
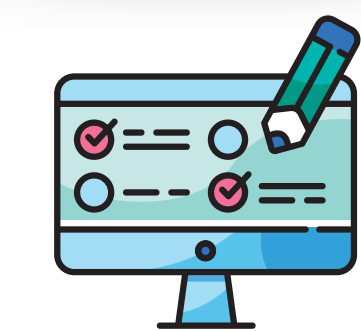
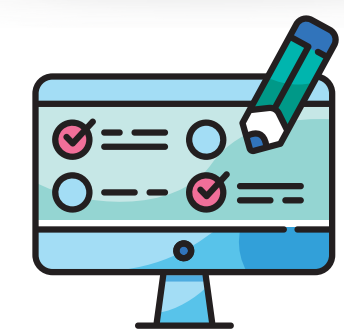
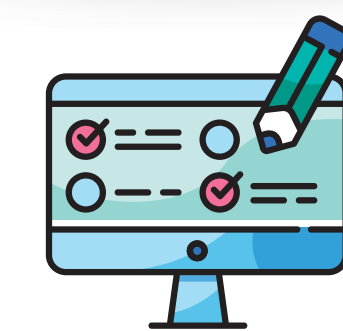


The ORIGINS Project is a prospective, longitudinal birth cohort, recruiting 10,000 pregnant women and their partners antenatally and following each family over a five-year period. Since April 2020, **The Community Wellbeing During COVID-19 Project** has collected ongoing information on the wellbeing, mental health, financial hardship, family functioning and vaccine attitudes among ORIGINS families with young children.

METHODS



Families with children aged 0-5 years completed online questionnaires at the following timepoints:



Type of information collected:

- Perceived stress
- General family functioning
- Financial stress & hardship
- Psychological and emotional wellbeing
- Mental health
- Worries, concerns & positive aspects of the pandemic & lockdowns
- Attitudes & perceptions regarding COVID-19 & available vaccines
- Qualitative data on the information & support needs of perinatal women

RESULTS

To date, the data has been used in the following ways:

1

Comparison of the experiences in Australia & the UK during the initial COVID-19 lockdown:

- April 2020: Data collected from 900 families: Australia & UK
- Varying geography, levels of socio-economic disadvantage and situational context during pandemic
- Both cohorts reported similar worries and challenges during the lockdown period including:
 - ❑ employment/finances
 - ❑ health anxiety
 - ❑ mental health and social isolation
 - ❑ caring for children
 - ❑ child development concerns

2

Vaccine perception among pregnant and breastfeeding women:

- September 2021: Data collected from 357 pregnant and breastfeeding women
- 43% were unsure or hadn't thought about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine
- Concerns regarding possible safety issues and/or side effects of the vaccine, as well as uncertainty regarding the long-term consequences of the vaccine on their unborn child.

3

Emotional health and wellbeing and support needs of perinatal women during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- June & July 2020: Data collected from 174 pregnant and postnatal women
- Varying levels of stress and isolation but also positive experiences
- Positive mental health was associated with higher levels of mindfulness and self-compassion,
- Findings: meditation-based or similar training might help support expectant and post-birth mothers during times of crisis, such as a pandemic.



CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a significant risk to the mental health and wellbeing of Australian families. The information generated from this project will be valuable to healthcare professionals and policy makers in planning and preparing for future infection waves or pandemics.

LONGITUDINAL FOLLOW-UP

As part of the longitudinal follow-up of families enrolled in ORIGINS, there are opportunities to assess and understand the long-term impact of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of families and young children.

