



This document provides a brief overview of the motivation, vision and objectives of the newly established Sydney Global Child Health Network (SGCHN). It also articulates the areas of research interest and the proposed leadership structure for the network.

Motivation

The University of Sydney (USYD) is an academic leader in health related research in the Asia Pacific region, where women, children and adolescents in low and middle income countries (LMICs) experience high levels of mortality and morbidity from infections and non-communicable disease. Individual researchers or research groups at the University of Sydney are often unaware of complementary studies and research interests of colleagues working in other areas. There is a unique opportunity to establish a more formalised academic community to coordinate, facilitate and support collective efforts across the University, by creating a forum where researchers can share exciting project outcomes, offer encouragement, consider latent synergies identify opportunities for collaboration. We aspire to create an open multidisciplinary network that supports a dynamic academic community in its pursuit of excellence and impact in global child health research.

Vision

The Sydney Global Child Health Network (SGCHN) facilitates world-leading research that improves the health of pregnant women, children and adolescents in LMICs, with a particular focus on the Asia Pacific region.

Clinical outreach and capacity building will be supported in partnership with the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN). Education initiatives supported by SGCHN, include relevant Master courses offered by the University of Sydney (e.g. the Master of Global Health and the Master of Medicine (Paediatric Medicine) and the Sydney Child Health Program).

SGCHN will engage with a broad range of partners and stakeholders, including relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government agencies and academic institutions. All activities within LMICs will be bi-directional, with an emphasis on local capacity building.

Objectives

Specific objectives include:

- 1) Encourage epidemiological, clinical, operational (including health services and health economics) and policy research to reduce childhood morbidity (including disability) and mortality, emphasising locally sustainable solutions.
- 2) Explore opportunities for cross-country, multi-centre trials and research collaboration.
- 3) Synthesise and disseminate high quality evidence that guides clinical and population health practice and supports policy development to improve the health of children, pregnant women and adolescents.

- 4) Support research capacity building in partnership with local (in-country) academic institutions.
- 5) Provide a forum to showcase research outputs and facilitate collaboration between different groups with an interest in global child health.
- 6) Link with relevant national and international initiatives such as The Coalition of Centres in Global Child Health.

Research themes

The following priority areas have been identified:

- 1) Nutrition
- 2) Infection & Immunisation
- 3) The First 1000 Days
- 4) Disability & Chronic Disease

These research themes provide an initial focus for our work and allow the identification of designated theme leaders (Addendum 1); it may be supplemented and further refined in the future. Research themes are championed by leaders from the Discipline of Child and Adolescent Health (CAH), largely based at The Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW) and the Sydney School of Public Health (SPH), located on the Camperdown campus. Enthusiastic theme leaders are critical to support the development of vibrant and well-connected research communities across the University.

Population of interest

We will focus primarily on children and adolescents (<18 years of age). However, the inclusion of pregnant women is essential, since a child's life starts long before delivery and the wellbeing of the mother/infant dyad is crucial for the child to thrive during the first 1000 days and beyond. It also encourages strong linkage with Maternal and Child Health (MCH) programs in LMICs.

Locally sustainable solutions

The development of locally sustainable solutions is critical, including local capacity building and partnership, as well as consideration of ecological sustainability and the identification of solutions that will support the health of current and future generations.

Membership

Two membership categories will be recognised:

- 1) Members – people who have a formal affiliation with the University of Sydney.
- 2) Affiliates – people who have no formal affiliation with the University of Sydney.

People who want to join the network should complete the [membership application](#), indicating areas of interest and formal affiliations. Researchers are requested to link with one or more of the recognised research themes, or indicate areas of activity not currently represented by a thematic stream (please specify on the application form).

Addendum 1

Research themes

These research themes provide focus to our work, but overlap and collaboration between different themes are expected and encouraged.

- 1) **Nutrition:** includes under- and over-nutrition (obesity and nutritional deficiencies)
- 2) **The First 1000 Days:** includes pregnancy, neonatal and infant care, normal growth and development
- 3) **Infection & Immunisation:** includes transmissible disease, infection control and prevention
- 4) **Disability & Chronic Disease:** includes cerebral palsy, congenital abnormalities, metabolic and other chronic disease

Core leadership group

The core leadership group will include equal representation from the Discipline of Child and Adolescent Health (CAH) and the Sydney School of Public Health (SPH), with invited representation from the Office of Global Health (OGH), Kids Research (KR) and the Research Office.

Core Leadership Group			
Coordinators: Ben Marais (CAH); Mu Li (SPH) with invited representation from OGH, KR and the Research Office			
Theme Leaders:			
Nutrition	Infection & Immunisation	The First 1000 Days	Disability & Chronic Disease
Ashraful (Neeloy) Alam (SPH) Louise Baur (CAH)	Sarah Bernays (SPH) Nick Wood (CAH)	Camille Raynes-Greenow (SPH) Kirsten Black (CCS)	Elizabeth Elliott (CAH) Gulam Khandaker (CAH) Nadia Badawi (CAH)

CAH – Discipline of Child and Adolescent Health (mostly based at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead)

SPH – Sydney School of Public Health (Sydney Medical School, Camperdown)

OGH – Office for Global Health (Sydney Medical School, Camperdown)

KR – Kids Research (Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network; The Children’s Hospital at Westmead)

CCS – Central Clinical School (Sydney Medical School, Camperdown)

Core leadership group - titles and positions

Ashraful (Neeloy) Alam

Senior Research Fellow in Medical Anthropology, International Public Health, Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney.

Nadia Badawi, AM

Macquarie Group Foundation Chair of Cerebral Palsy, Cerebral Palsy Research Institute, University of Sydney; Medical Director and co-Head of Grace Centre for Newborn Intensive Care, The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

Louise Baur, AM

Professor and Head of Child and Adolescent Health, University of Sydney; Head, The Children's Hospital at Westmead Clinical School; Professor, Sydney School of Public Health; Lead, Centre of Research Excellence in the Early Prevention of Obesity in Childhood (EPOCH); Consultant Paediatrician, Weight Management Services, The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

Sarah Bernays

Lecturer, International Public Health, Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney.

Kirsten Black

Joint Head of Discipline Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Neonatology, Central Clinical School, University of Sydney.

Elizabeth Elliott, AM

Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Sydney; Consultant Paediatrician, The Children's Hospital at Westmead; NHMRC Practitioner Fellow; Director, Australian Paediatric Surveillance Unit; co-lead Centre of Research Excellence in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; Co-Director Care and Intervention for Children and Adolescents with Drug and Alcohol Problems.

Gulam Khandaker

Adjunct Associate Professor, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney.

Mu Li

Professor of International Public Health; Endocrinologist; Coordinator of the new Master in Global Health, Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney.

Ben Marais

Professor of Paediatrics and Infectious Diseases; Deputy-Director of the Marie Bashir Institute for Infectious Diseases and Biosecurity (www.sydney.edu.au/mbi); Co-lead Centre for Research Excellence (CRE) in Tuberculosis Control (www.tbcre.org); Senior Paediatric Infectious Diseases Specialist, The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

Camille Raynes-Greenow

Associate-Professor and NHMRC Career Development Fellow, Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney.

Nick Wood

Associate Professor and NHMRC Career Development Fellow, National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS); Consultant Paediatrician, The Children's Hospital at Westmead.