

MARY G DON'T SMOKE

WHEN LAUNCHING

the radio spots, **Professor Fiona Stanley**, Director, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research said:

"Every mother wants a healthy child and it's essential that find a more effective way to communicate the dangers of smoking in pregnancy and around children to Aboriginal women. It's important that we don't blame mothers but give them information; the same information that all mothers need to have a healthy baby. I think Mary G is a great voice to be giving such an important message and this sort of targeted campaign has the potential to really improve the health and well being of both Aboriginal children and their mothers."



Professor Fiona Stanley, Mary G, Johnny Garlett (3 years) and Tjiirdm McGuire (4 months)

SMOKING AMONGST INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Cigarette smoking is a serious but often-overlooked cause of health problems among Indigenous women. About 46% of Indigenous women smoke and the rate of tobacco-related deaths in this population is 3.7 times higher than for non-Indigenous women. Research shows that Indigenous women experience particular difficulty quitting and are both unaware of, and underestimate, the risks associated with smoking and with smoking during pregnancy. As a result, more than 50% of Indigenous women continue to smoke during pregnancy. As smoking is one of the largest preventable causes of infant ill health and death, this situation is particularly concerning.



WHO IS MARY G?

Is she a man? Is she a woman? Does it matter? Mary G is the Queen of the Kimberley; an Aussie icon. Mary Gerrdarddyu started out as a cult Radio presenter of indeterminate gender. Her flair and floral dress sense has gained her more than a few admirers. She's taken Australia by storm on the National Indigenous Radio Network, and Kim Beazley declared her "Queen of Australia" while Lowitja O'Donoghue called Mary the "Face of Reconciliation".

RADIO SPOTS

ACOSH is committed to providing information about the dangers of smoking and passive smoking. ACOSH has commissioned Mary G to record six radio spots highlighting the dangers of smoking during pregnancy. These radio spots have been professionally produced and duplicated onto CD's. The CD's which has been distributed to over 160 Indigenous radio stations across Australia. ACOSH has also prepared a fact-sheet (overleaf) outlining the latest information on the effects of smoking during pregnancy.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Contact your local Indigenous radio station and encourage them to play the Mary G radio spots

Offer to do a radio interview to promote awareness about the dangers of smoking and passive smoking

Use these radio spots as a tool in community education activities about the dangers of smoking during pregnancy

If you want a copy of the "MARY G – DON'T SMOKE" cd contact acosh by email via info@acosh.org

Diana
Princess of Wales Memorial Fund

SMOKING & PREGNANCY *THE LATEST FACTS*

Smoking harms many aspects and every phase of reproduction. It makes it more difficult to become pregnant, and increases the risk of infertility.

WOMEN WHO SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY ARE:

- more likely to have a spontaneous abortion, miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or still-birth;
- at increased risk of their baby dying during the first four weeks after birth;
- 3-4 times more likely to have a baby with SIDS;
- 2.5 times more likely to have a low-birth-weight baby. Low birth weight babies are at increased risk of illness and death;
- more likely to give birth prematurely. Premature babies are at a greater risk of illness and death;
- at increased risk of having a baby with birth defects;
- at increased risk of having a baby with reduced lung function; and
- at increased risk of serious pregnancy complications, including:

Placenta previa

(a condition where the placenta grows too close to the opening of the uterus, frequently necessitating delivery by Caesarean section)

Placental abruption

(a condition where the placenta prematurely separates from the wall of the uterus leading to pre-term delivery, stillbirth, or early infant death.)

PASSIVE SMOKING

Passive smoking whilst pregnant increases the risk of:

- having a spontaneous abortion;
- having a low-birth-weight baby; and
- SIDS. *Babies exposed to second-hand smoke, or passive smoking, after birth are at twice the risk of SIDS.*

OTHER

The nicotine in cigarettes can cause constrictions in the blood vessels of the umbilical cord and uterus, thereby decreasing the amount of oxygen available to the fetus. Nicotine may also reduce the amount of blood in the fetal cardiovascular system.

Women who smoke whilst breastfeeding produce less milk of poorer quality. The milk also contains nicotine.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004.

ACOSH

Australian Council on Smoking and Health

The Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH) is a Western Australian based organisation representing more than 30 medical and health organisations which aims to raise community awareness about smoking and health issues.

Further information about ACOSH can be found at www.acosh.org