

## Can we safely reduce the risk of breathing problems for newborn babies by giving corticosteroid injections to their mothers before a planned caesarean section?

### Welcome to Newsletter 2 for the C\*STEROID Trial

**C\*STEROID** is a randomised control trial of **antenatal corticosteroids prior to planned caesarean section at 35+0 to 39+6 weeks**. Funded by the New Zealand Health Research Council and Australia's Medical Research Future Fund, this trial will recruit more than **2,500** mothers and their babies. The trial is designed with sufficient power to assess neonatal respiratory morbidity (benefit) and neonatal hypoglycaemia (potential harm) to be able **to reliably inform future clinical practice**.



C\*STEROID participant family, shared with consent

## C\*STEROID TEAM NEWS

We have been very sad to say goodbye to our superstar Trial Manager, Laura Mackay this month. The good news is that not only will she stay with the team in a small part-time role, but we have a new superstar Trial Manager joining the team. Welcome Elisa Tam!



Laura Mackay



Elisa Tam

## RECRUITMENT UPDATE

It remains tough as COVID, winter illness and staffing impact our recruitment but well done to all sites for recruitment numbers last month! During July, we have had 15 new mothers and babies participate. This includes 2 participants from our newest site — Counties Manukau.



**Te Whatu Ora**  
Health New Zealand  
Counties Manukau

**Welcome to Charlotte Oyston and the rest of the team at Counties!**

Site	Total (babies)	Last month
Auckland	213	6
Manukau	2	2
Waikato	71	4
Tauranga	28	0
Christchurch	29	1
Wellington	15	1
Northland	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>15</b>

Australian  
sites coming  
very soon!



## NEW INFOGRAPHIC

We have a new infographic for you. This can be included in your invitation email to all potential participants. It is a great way to briefly summarise the trial. It is available on our Twitter or Facebook page (see below). We can also provide it as an electronic resource for you.

## RESEARCH RETRACTION

C\*STEROID was planned due to uncertainty in the benefits and risks of corticosteroids prior to planned caesarean section at late preterm & term gestations. We were partly informed by four published trials included in the 2018 Cochrane Review. However recent and increasing concern about the integrity of some of these trials has led to EJOG (European Journal of Obstetric and Gynecology and Reproductive Biology) retracting one of these trials. Three of the four original trials included in the 2018 Cochrane review are also being omitted in the 2021 update due to high risk of bias.

**C\*STEROID will provide the first high-quality evidence on the balance between the benefit and harm of corticosteroids used in this setting.**

For the full article on the research retraction, visit:

<https://retractionwatch.com/2022/05/08/journal-retracts-c-section-paper-with-impossible-data/>

For the 2021 Cochrane review, visit:

[http://www.cochrane.org/CD006614/PREG\\_corticosteroids-preventing-serious-breathing-problems-newborn-after-caesarean-section-term](http://www.cochrane.org/CD006614/PREG_corticosteroids-preventing-serious-breathing-problems-newborn-after-caesarean-section-term)

# THANK YOU!

We know without your ongoing support and encouragement, this trial would not be possible. Thank you to all recruiting sites, LMCs, obstetricians and core staff who continue to help facilitate this trial. Keep up the great work!

## CONTACT US

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### Can we help newborn babies breathe easy after a caesarean section?

#### Would you like to join the C\*STEROID Trial?

If you're pregnant and have a caesarean section planned at 35 weeks to 39 weeks + 6 days (and don't have diabetes) you are able to take part.



#### How will this research help newborn babies?

Babies born by caesarean section before labour has started are more likely to experience short-term breathing problems and need neonatal nursery admission compared to babies born by vaginal birth or caesarean section after labour has started. Giving corticosteroids to mums before birth may safely reduce this risk and keep mum and baby together.

#### What the study involves

If you choose to take part you will receive two injections 24 hours apart in the week before your planned caesarean section. This will be either a corticosteroid (betamethasone) or placebo (saline, 'salt water'). For safety we will monitor baby's blood sugars in the first 12 hours after birth.



#### Find out more

Visit [liggins.auckland.ac.nz/csteroid](http://liggins.auckland.ac.nz/csteroid) or [facebook.com/csteroidtrial](https://facebook.com/csteroidtrial) for more information and to view our intro video. Talk to your midwife or obstetrician and contact the C\*STEROID research team by email: [csteroid@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:csteroid@auckland.ac.nz)



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## ANY STORIES?

If you have any stories, news or updates you would like to see shared in our next monthly newsletter please feel free to get in touch with [csteroid@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:csteroid@auckland.ac.nz)



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