



Transforming the lives of women & their families



Wellbeing of Women champions women's health by investing in pioneering research to find cures and treatments across the breadth of reproductive health and childbirth.

Many of the treatments and cures taken for granted today came about thanks to research we have funded over the past 53 years. Our first grant discovered the importance of taking folic acid in pregnancy. Our work also led to the use of ultrasound in pregnancy and the use of lasers to treat cervical cancer.

With only 2.48% of publicly funded research devoted to reproductive health and childbirth, our work is vital for supporting the lives of women and their families.

Changing lives,

Three key areas of women's health that

Ovarian cancer

is one of the deadliest cancers, with only 35% of women surviving ten years after diagnosis. Over 7000 cases of ovarian cancer are diagnosed each year in the UK, with its incidence increasing by almost a fifth since the 1970s. Known as the 'silent killer', 70% of patients are diagnosed only when the disease is too advanced to treat effectively. We urgently need to find an effective diagnostic test which will pick the cancer up early so that it can be treated before it has spread outside the ovary.

Wellbeing of Women is one of the few sources of funding for research into the prevention and diagnosis of gynaecological cancers. Our Research Advisory Committee (made up of 20 leading experts in women's health) has made ovarian cancer one of our priority areas for research because survival rates remain so low compared to other common cancers.

We are delighted to announce that we are funding an exciting new project led by Dr David Jeevan, an outstanding doctor based at the University of Birmingham, which offers real hope to women with ovarian cancer. Using the latest super-computer technology, he will work on developing a simple effective test which can detect tiny changes in hormone patterns in the urine of women with ovarian cancer. Such a simple and convenient urine test could lead to routine screening for the disease, which has the potential to save many thousands of women's lives and has worldwide implications.

Endometriosis

is a disabling and chronic disease, where cells like the ones in the lining of the womb are found growing elsewhere in the body. The resulting inflammation and scar tissue often fuses a women's internal organs together, which can cause agonising pelvic pain and infertility.

One in 10 women of reproductive age are affected – that is around 1.5



million women in the UK alone. Endometriosis is as common as diabetes among women, yet very little is known about the disease, meaning that women suffer on average for 7.5 years before they are diagnosed.

Endometriosis costs £8.2 billion in NHS budget and lost income. Many women are forced to leave work, because they are in constant pain. There are no effective treatments and there is an urgent need for new treatments to end the suffering and distress of women with this condition.

...saving lives

Wellbeing of Women is prioritising

Our researcher at the University of Edinburgh, Professor Andrew Horne, is building on research previously funded by Wellbeing of Women, which made the exciting discovery that endometriosis cells behave in a similar way to cancer cells in the way in which they grow and spread.

Professor Horne strongly believes that anticancer drugs could prevent endometriosis and is now testing cancer drugs already in use and administered in small doses to find out if they are effective in treating endometriosis. This research is on the verge of making the first real breakthrough in treating endometriosis for over five decades.

Preterm Birth

Every year, an estimated 15 million babies are born prematurely and this number is rising. Preterm birth complications are the leading cause of death among children under 5 years of age and responsible for nearly 1 million deaths in 2015. Even when babies survive, there is increased likelihood of disabilities such as cerebral palsy.



Unfortunately, progress in better understanding the causes of preterm birth has been too slow. To address this, Wellbeing of Women has established the Harris-Wellbeing of Women Research Centre for Preterm Birth in Liverpool.

Under the leadership of Professor Zarko Alfirevic, this centre believes that identifying the different causes in each case will enable them to develop preventative treatments for each woman.

They are bringing together different strands of research, which is key to accelerating progress. The team have interconnected research programmes that are directed at increasing understanding of the causes and mechanisms of preterm birth, in order to develop predictive markers and much-needed new treatments.

53 years of discovering new treatments and cures for women and their babies

These are just some of our achievements:

- The importance of folic acid for all pregnant women. Our first grant discovered it was a key factor to ensure the healthy development of babies.
- Fetal monitoring and antenatal diagnosis of conditions such as Down's Syndrome.
- Development of cooling as an innovative treatment for newborns at risk of brain damage.
- The identification of the link between the HPV virus and cervical cancer. Today, all school girls are immunised against HPV.
- The pioneering use of CyberKnife® technology - targeted radiotherapy - to treat gynaecological cancers.
- Repurposing the diabetes drug, Metformin, to treat womb cancer.
- The development of safe and effective use of lasers for cervical cancer.
- The use of BOTOX® to treat Overactive Bladder Syndrome.
- The creation of the Baby Bio Bank, the most comprehensive collection in the world containing 7000 samples from families who have experienced pregnancy complications, now used to enable worldwide research into conditions such as miscarriage.
- Establishment of a Preterm Birth Research Centre to identify the causes and find new treatments.
- The establishment of the first fetal medicine centre in the UK at King's College, London, under the directorship of world class authority, Professor Kypros Nicolaides.
- Critical work showing that events occurring during fetal life can have a long-term impact on adult health.
- Our research in the 1970's is directly responsible for laying the foundations for neonatal intensive care today.



With your help today, we can continue to develop new treatments and cures for women and their babies

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