



TAHS News

2010 ISSUE I

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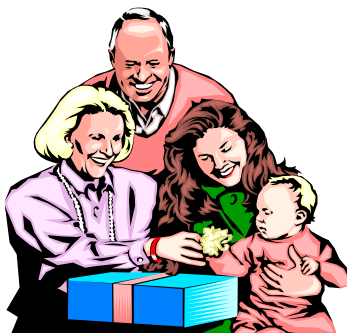
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Welcome to the 2010 newsletter for the TAHS TAHS - How did your family become involved?

The Tasmanian Longitudinal Health Study (TAHS), has now been running for over 40 years and is one of the world's largest and longest running respiratory health studies. In 1968 the TAHS enrolled 8,500 7-year-old Tasmanian school children in a medical research study looking at asthma. The parents of these children filled in surveys on themselves and all their children. All up over 45,000 people were part of the TAHS in 1968, including you. We have highlighted below some of the study findings and information about further research.

What's next for TAHS?.....



New Study of the TAHS Parents

We are trying to understand why some diseases run in families. We have followed up nearly all members of the TAHS study except your parents, who we are now hoping will help us by completing a short questionnaire. We will start contacting your parents soon, so please let them know.

New Study of Lung Reactivity – have you been contacted?

Increased lung sensitivity in middle-age increases the risk of other serious lung diseases such as asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Understanding factors that cause people to develop lung sensitivity will help in preventing these diseases in the future. We are investigating lung sensitivity in the TAHS cohort and are asking for your help.

**To update your contact details – Call 1800 110 711
or email inq-tas@unimelb.edu.au**



What Have we learned? - The TAHS has contributed some important information to the understanding of many allergic diseases. Below is a summary of our findings so far.

Asthma Medications not Used Properly in Adulthood

Despite the excellent medications available for asthma many people continue to have symptoms of asthma everyday. We used the TAHS cohort to investigate how well asthma medications are being used in the community. We found that a lot of people with asthma did not use enough medication. When people did use enough medication they had better lung health. These results show how important it is for medications to be taken in the way your doctor has advised.



Oral Contraceptive Use in Females Increases the Risk of Hay fever in Adulthood

It is unclear why allergic disease affects more females than males in adulthood. We found that long-term use of the oral contraceptive pill increased the risk of hay fever in adult life. The reason for this increased risk is unclear but may be related to the significant hormonal fluctuations women experience during their childbearing years.



Brothers & Sisters Follow up Study - Completed

The Brothers and Sisters study is nearly completed. This study will help us understand why one child in a family gets asthma and the other children do not. This study is unique and has not been done anywhere else in the world. We have sent all your brothers and sisters a questionnaire in the mail and invited some into our lung testing laboratories.



Is the Home Environment Related to Asthma?

Exposure to wood fire heating and gas appliances has been associated with asthma and respiratory symptoms such as wheezing and cough. We found a small increase in doctor-diagnosed asthma in people who used ducted gas central heating. This could be due to drying of the air by ducted central heating or be associated with increased dust circulation with these types of heaters. We also found having mould in the home was associated with an increase in asthma-related respiratory symptoms. Our results suggest reducing exposure to gas appliances and mould might reduce respiratory symptoms.

Eczema in Childhood can Lead to Asthma

Allergies in childhood, such as hay fever, eczema in babies and food allergies are all important risk factors for the development of asthma in later life. Eczema is quite common in early childhood. Therefore protecting against and treating eczema in childhood may help to stop asthma developing.

