

## **Parent Information Statement for the Research Project:**

### **'What About New Dads (WAND) Study'**

#### **Understanding Negative Thinking Patterns and Themes among New Fathers**

Document Version 1; dated 28/08/2018

You are invited to participate in the research project identified above which is being conducted by Dr Richard Fletcher, Dr Linda Campbell, Dr Jennifer St George, Dr Carmel Loughland, Ms Jaime Wroe, and Miss Gabrielle Gribbin from the School of Health Sciences and the Family Action Centre at the University of Newcastle.

The research is part of Jaime's studies at the University of Newcastle, supervised by Dr Richard Fletcher from the School of Health Sciences.

#### **Why is the research being done?**

Researchers at the University of Newcastle are trying to find out more about how new fathers think and feel. Becoming a parent is an important milestone in a person's life. There are many changes to get used to and a lot of new things to learn. Whilst there has been a lot of research investigating this important transition for new mothers, there has not been a great deal of research looking at the experiences of new fathers. The study aims to investigate thoughts and thinking patterns among new fathers following the birth of their first child, with a particular emphasis on looking at negative thought experiences influencing new fathers. This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Newcastle (H-2014-0137).

#### **Who can participate?**

All new fathers of typically developing infants aged between 1 and 13 months are invited to participate in the survey.

The study focus is on typical fathering transitions. Therefore, parents of infants diagnosed with a developmental disorder are not eligible to participate in this study.

A selection of fathers with infants aged 6 weeks or less will be invited to participate in stage two of the study, which involves two additional online surveys over the postnatal year. Eligible participants will be notified about this study during the initial online survey and invited to register their interest to take part.

#### **What would you be asked to do?**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete some demographic information and the following four surveys:

- The Postnatal Risk Questionnaire (PNRQ) is a 13-item assessment of potential risk factors that may increase the likelihood of psychological distress during the postnatal year.
- The Parenting Sense of Competency Scale (PSOC), which is a 16-item survey used to assesses your satisfaction and perceived ability as a new parent.
- The Postnatal Thoughts Questionnaire (PTQ), which consists of 30 questions relating to the thoughts you may or may not experience in your new role as a father.
- Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21), which is a brief 21-item measure of psychological distress.

Participants of infants aged between 4 to 6 weeks will be invited to participate in an additional longitudinal study, which will involve completing a further two brief online surveys at infant age 4 – 6 months and 9 months post-birth. These surveys will investigate psychological experiences and father-infant relations over the postnatal year. Again, participation in this further optional phase is entirely voluntary and only individuals that have expressed an interest will be formally invited.

Researchers are interested in the parenting experience, and are aware that how fathers feel during their transition to parenthood is directly influenced by the experiences of their partner. To find out more about this relationship we would like to hear from partners. At completion of the study you will be given the choice to invite your partner to complete the mother version of the study.

### **What choice do you have?**

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you. If you have been introduced to the study by a professional staff member of an organisation affiliated with this study, such as a midwife, your decision will have NO influence on your relationship with or the services you receive from that provider.

If you decide to participate you may withdraw from the research at any time without explanation and have the option of withdrawing any data that identifies you.

You may omit or refuse to answer any question without penalty or explanation. You have the right to have any of your questions about the study answered. If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask us before the study begins.

### **How much time will it take?**

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participants eligible for the additional study phases will be provided with comprehensive details for each study in a participant information statement.

## **What are the risks and benefits of participating?**

You may not directly benefit from participation in this study; however you may gain satisfaction from knowing that your experiences will contribute to scientific knowledge that may provide future dads and their partners with greater community support. The study may provide parents with:

- a better understanding of the importance of paternal mental health and its indicators;
- an awareness of the challenges facing modern dads;
- education which may strengthen the co-parenting and infant relationships: and
- an awareness of service providers and programs available in the community to support new families.

Your privacy is important to researchers at the University of Newcastle. All personal information will be handled with strict confidentiality. Any identifying data will be de-identified using a coding system and stored in a secure location accessible only to the chief investigator for this study.

Participation in this study will not involve any physical harm; however, some of the questions in the survey are confronting and cover topics some parents may find upsetting or disturbing. Should you experience any emotional discomfort in response to any of the questions you are under NO obligation to answer that item and may continue with the survey without penalty or explanation.

Participation in this study involves the completion of a standardised test used to routinely screen for depressive symptoms during the postnatal period. Scores from this test would not be sufficient basis for clinical decisions or diagnosis as they may contain substantial margins of error, and are not intended for diagnostic purposes in this study. Therefore, it is not possible to provide feedback of individual scores however, should you have any concerns or want to discuss the matter further please contact your GP or an appropriate health professional.

Should you have any concerns or feel you need to discuss your personal circumstances with a professional please contact your GP or any of the following services who can provide timely and professional advice to new parents experiencing difficulties during this period.

MensLine  
1300 789 978  
[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

beyondblue  
1300 224 636  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

Parentline  
1300 301 300  
[www.parentline.com.au](http://www.parentline.com.au)

## **How will your privacy be protected?**

Your privacy is important to researchers at the University of Newcastle. All data will be handled with strict confidentiality, and will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the study research team. If you do choose to provide identifying data such as your email address, this information will be kept separately to the dataset and your identity and will be in no way related to your specific responses. Consequently, it will not be possible to remove your response data after testing is completed.

Based on your responses in study one you may be invited to participate in study phases two and/or three. Any confidential information collected during the later study phases are handled with the same strict confidentiality and storage procedures described above to protect any personal information collected. Information collected is for the sole purpose of the current study and will not be used in any future research without your consent.

### **How will the information collected be used?**

All data collected for this project will be de-identified prior to the reporting of any findings, which will only refer to overall trends and make no reference to individuals that have participated in the study. The proposed study and its findings will be reported in a thesis as the final component for Ms Wroe's postgraduate degree. In addition, it is the intention of the research team to prepare research papers for scientific journal submission during the period 2018 to 2020.

In addition, if you consent to your data from this study being utilised in future research, only de-identified data will be used. Again, overall trends may be reported by the research team by way of scientific journal submission or conference presentation but no reference to individuals will be reported.

### **What will you receive for your participation?**

Unfortunately, we cannot pay participants for taking part in this study. However, we understand how busy it is being a new parent and appreciate the time and effort involved in participating in our research. As a token of our appreciation, participants completing the survey will be invited to enter a draw to win a \$100 eGiftcard. Participants may also find comfort in the knowledge that research into paternal experiences can assist in making important changes to support fathers in the future.

### **What do you need to do to participate?**

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you have questions, please contact the researcher.

### **Further information**

Should you have any queries regarding the study, any of the investigators will be glad to answer your questions at any time.

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If you want to find out about the results of this study, please select 'yes' for the relevant question in the online survey and provide a current email or postal address.

### **Complaints about this research**

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2014-0137.

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to Research Services, The University of Newcastle, telephone (02) 49216333, email [Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au).

*If you would like more information, please contact Jaime Wroe, School of Health University of Newcastle ([Jaime.Wroe@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Jaime.Wroe@newcastle.edu.au))*