



Alberta Pregnancy
Outcomes and Nutrition

What's new with APrON?

Using Longitudinal Data to Understand Maternal Health and Child Development

ABCD (Alberta Births Common Data) Study

The Alberta Births Common Data is a collaborative effort between two pregnancy cohorts to collect the same information over time. The overall aims and methods of these studies is similar enough to allow for this unique collaboration. By collecting the same information from two different groups of families researchers can undertake more complex analyses. They can also validate scientific findings between data sets, and will have enough information to answer questions about less common conditions such as asthma, ADHD and learning problems. These pregnancy cohorts are Alberta Pregnancy Outcomes and Nutrition (APrON) and All Our Babies (AOB). AOB and APrON have collected data on families since pregnancy, and now they will collect the same information from participants as children enter school.



APrON and AOB already have detailed information and biological samples from pregnancy to age 3. Some of this early information is the same. The ABCD approach will ensure that new information on demographics, lifestyle, mental health, family functioning, parenting, child care, child development (social, emotional, physical, cognitive) and biological markers is consistent. This information is critical to determine the early origins of child development, including emotional and behavior problems, learning problems, injury, obesity and chronic disease. The detailed information on adult wellbeing can be analyzed to advance understanding of issues of importance to families with young children.

AOB (All Our Babies) Study

Aims of All Our Babies (AOB) are parallel to APrON to understand the intersection between family and maternal wellbeing, including maternal mental health, and social support and child outcomes, as well as to understand trajectories of health, resilience and development across childhood. AOB has data from 3200 mothers and children. Participants have completed a series of questionnaires from the prenatal period through to when children are 5 years of age. AOB has information on demographics, lifestyle, physical and mental health, social support, stress, parenting, breastfeeding, infant and child development. This study will contribute to the understanding of the biologic mechanisms and social/ environmental pathways underlying associations between early and later life outcomes, gene-environment interactions, and resilience among children and families.



The All Our Babies Study

Send Us Your Feedback!

If you have any comments or questions about the *APrON Leaflet*, we want to hear them! We would also like to hear your ideas for future newsletters. Please contact us at apron@ucalgary.ca

We truly value your feedback!

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RESULTS

Study Title: It's all in the family

We recently looked at the characteristics of the families who took part in the APrON and the AOB studies. We also investigated whether the APrON and AOB participants were similar to the families in Alberta and Canada who took part in the Maternity Experiences Survey (MES). The MES was a national survey of Canadian women's experiences, perceptions, knowledge and practices before conception and during pregnancy, birth and the early months of parenthood. We found that APrON and AOB participants differed in their education, income, ethnicity, and foreign-born status, but they were similar in maternal age, body mass index, and marital status. The differences between the women who participated in these two studies could be due to the recruitment methods used. APrON used community-based methods such as posters and pamphlets. AOB used these methods but they also used a population-based approach; that is, Calgary Laboratory Services asked pregnant women who took routine tests if AOB could contact them. As a result, AOB were able to reach more pregnant women who were less likely to respond to posters and pamphlets ----- pregnant women who were less educated, had lower incomes and were new immigrants. When we compared APrON and AOB women to the Maternity Experiences Survey (MES), we again found some differences: The MES used a method called 'stratified sampling' in which they defined potential participants by province or territory, and also by the mother's age. They recruited pregnant women in each province and territory until their sample was similar to Canadian census data. Compared to the MES, the APrON and AOB cohorts had fewer pregnant women at the lowest maternal ages, lowest levels of education, and lowest income groups. These findings suggest that attracting and retaining young pregnant women with lower levels of education and income into studies about pregnancy that are conducted in cities may require unique and innovative approaches.

Authors: Brenda MY Leung, Sheila W McDonald, Bonnie J Kaplan, Gerald F Giesbrecht, Suzanne C Tough

Reference: Comparison of sample characteristics in two pregnancy cohorts: community-based versus population-based recruitment methods. BMC Medical Research Methodology. December 2013, 13:149

Join APrON's Participant Advisory Committee

Next Meeting November 19

The APrON team will be running a participant focus group this November and we want you to be a part of it! If you have ideas on how we can keep participants, like you, engaged and interested in our research, we want to hear from you. The session will be from 1-2:30pm and will take place at the Owerko Centre at the Child Development Centre in Calgary. If you would like to learn more about this exciting opportunity, please contact us by email at apron@ucalgary.ca

HELP KEEP OUR
FILES UP-TO-DATE

Staying in touch with our participants is a key part of our work. When we lose touch with people we lose some of our ability to answer important health questions. If you have moved, changed your phone number or have a new email address, please take a moment to let us know of these changes. Keep in mind that we can send you surveys and keep you up-to-date with the *APrON Leaflet* no matter where you live, even if you are outside of Alberta or Canada.



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