BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

Australia calls for urgent review on vaccines during pregnancy

June 20, 2022 | News

The likelihood of women receiving both vaccines during pregnancy increased if they attended antenatal care in the first trimester



Australia's University of Queensland (UQ) researchers are calling for an urgent review of low influenza vaccination rates for pregnant women and whooping cough vaccinations for young and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mothers-to-be.

The figures were revealed by researchers from the multi-jurisdictional study, that analysed the largest observational cohort of mothers with babies born in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory from 2012-2017.

Lead UQ School of Public Health investigator Dr Lisa McHugh said researchers looked at vaccination rates for almost 600,000 pregnant women.

“Only 15 per cent of the group received the influenza vaccine overall, while 27 per cent were vaccinated against whooping cough, and just 12 per cent received both,” Dr McHugh said.

Influenza vaccines have been recommended, and free, for pregnant women in Australia for decades, as they protect both mothers and newborn babies from severe infection, and whooping cough vaccines were introduced in 2015 to protect babies under 6 months of age.

An urgent updated review of these data and vaccination strategies is needed before the next influenza pandemic or whooping cough outbreak occurs.