

## **Under the Microscope** with Professor Beilin

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Most adult health problems start not only when we are young – but when we are in the womb.

A local study investigating this theory has recently received a \$812,000 grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council, which will allow continued research into the precursors of adult health problems.

RPH is part of the 16-year-old study known as the Perth Longitudinal Children's Raine Cohort – which is researching the changes in health of 3000 children, from the womb through to their adult years.

The children are examined every three years to assess changes in weight, blood pressure, nutrition, physical activity and fitness, blood cholesterol and diabetes.

University of WA Professor of Medicine and RPH Medical Research Foundation chairman, Lawrence Beilin, leads the study team of Prof. Lyle Palmer, Dr Wendy Oddy, Dr Trevor Mori, Dr Garth Kendall, and Dr Beth Hands, as well as researchers from Curtin and Notre Dame universities and King Edward Memorial Hospital.

Prof. Beilin said the study's aim was to find childhood and antenatal instigators of adult diabetes, obesity and heart disease.

"There is a world wide epidemic of obesity and diabetes with rates tripling in young adults in the last twenty years," he said.

"Evidence already gathered suggests that by the age of eight, about a fifth of the children are at risk of obesity, diabetes and cholesterol problems."

Prof Beilin said the teen years were the most likely time for change in health behaviours as adolescent experimentation could lead to various health problems.

This study offers the opportunity to study genetic and environmental interactions, including the role of psychosocial factors predisposing to adult obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

The "Raine" name refers to the original benefactor of this study, The Raine Foundation for the University of Western Australia.