**Transcript**

***Associate Professor Helen McLachlan – One-on-one midwifery care reduces c-sections and improves health outcomes for babies***

The research that we’ve done recently is Mother and Child Health Research here at La Trobe have done a study where we looked at a new model of care that’s been offered at the Women’s Hospital. So, for women having a baby. They’re cared for by a main midwife, a primary midwife with one or two backup midwives and that midwife cares for them through the pregnancy, labour, birth and after the birth, both in hospital and at home. So it’s the first trial of its kind in Australia. It’s the largest trial in the world and only the third anywhere and there were over 2,300 women in the study. So half of them got the new model of one-on-one caseload care and half got the standard options of care offered at the Women’s Hospital.

So, the study has just been completed and we aimed to see if we can reduce the caesarian section rate for women. That was the primary aim. Caesarian section rates have doubled in Australia over the last 20 years and it’s really important because of the risks of surgery and the risks of caesarian that we try and reverse that trend. So we actually found that 22 percent reduced risk of caesarian for women who had this on-on-one model of care. Women had more normal births. They had less need for epidural pain relief and about a third less of the babies of women who had this model were admitted to the Special Care Nursery.

This model of care at the moment is only offered to less than about 10 percent of women in Australia so the next step now is to look at how the model can be expanded and how it might be sustained. It’s a different way of working for midwives. The midwives found the relationship with women very satisfying. So midwives like it. Women liked it. Women are very satisfied with the model. And so, we really think that reducing caesarian section rates we can reduce the, the risk of complications for large, much larger numbers of women than are currently offered this model of care.