

Late diagnosis on the rise in WA, as hip condition goes undetected

The equivalent of 2 infants a day are diagnosed with hip dysplasia in WA, with the state's rate of 20 cases detected per every 1000 new babies born each year, almost 3 times that of the rest of the nation. Despite this, community awareness of hip dysplasia and factors influencing it remains limited, contributing to the rising number of those diagnosed late.

Hip dysplasia, also known as developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) is a common condition which occurs when the ball and socket of the hip do not fit together in their 'normal' position. Sometimes this is due to abnormal development and/or lack of growth of the hip joint. It can result in months — and in some cases years — of medical treatment. Left undiagnosed, it's one of the leading causes of early-onset arthritis of the hip and is a significant public health issue. Treatment is optimised when diagnosis occurs within the first 3 months of life. In 2010, there were 17 cases of late diagnosed hip dislocations requiring surgery at PMH; a number which is 3 times above the established and acceptable rate. Anecdotally the number of children requiring surgery for the condition in WA has risen further since this time.



Two-year-old Perth boy Hugo, has spent a quarter of his young life casted, from chest to toe, to treat a severely dislocated left hip. The diagnosis of this severe form of hip dysplasia, which was only made at 9-months of age, has seen Hugo endure 5 surgical procedures in the past 12 months. Hugo is now one the Faces of Healthy Hips Week for 2018, helping to raising awareness of hip dysplasia in the community.

Sarah Twomey, a Perth occupational therapist and mother of two children impacted by hip dysplasia, established not for profit organisation Healthy Hips Australia, and the Healthy Hips Week initiative, to improve awareness, support and early diagnosis for the condition.

Sarah says, “only 1 out of every 2 families that are supported by Healthy Hips Australia have heard of the condition prior to their child being diagnosed with it”. “Parents are the best advocates for their children. Arming them with the knowledge about the risk factors for, and potential signs of, this condition means they can help their child to be diagnosed as early as possible. Many don't even realise they have a family history of hip issues, until their child's treatment commences which prompts the conversation to be had with extended family”.

The third annual Healthy Hips Week runs from 8-14 April 2018. All parents and parents- to-be are being urged to educate themselves about the risk factors for and potential signs of hip dysplasia, and ensure their child(s) hips are checked not only at birth, but at 6-weeks, 6-months, and 12-months of age. For more information about hip dysplasia visit: healthyhipsaustralia.org.au



MEDIA CONTACT

For further information and interview opportunities with Sarah Twomey, Hugo's parents, or parents of other children affected by hip dysplasia, please contact Sarah: sarah@healthyhipsaustralia.org.au, 0422 231 218

FURTHER INFORMATION

Healthy Hips Week 8-4 April:

<http://www.healthyhipsaustralia.org.au/healthy-hips-week/>

Hip dysplasia awareness flyer:

http://www.healthyhipsaustralia.org.au/pdf/HHA_hipdysplasia_awareness_flyer.pdf

WA Register of Developmental Anomalies Report 2015:

http://kemh.health.wa.gov.au/services/register_developmental_anomalies/documents/reports/2015_Annual_Report_of_the_WA_Register_of_Developmental_Anomalies.pdf

Late Diagnosis Research:

<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2016/204/6/increase-late-diagnosed-developmental-dysplasia-hip-south-australia-risk-factors>