

Professor Jonathan Morris AM
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Professor Jonathan Morris AM is a Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and a fetal medicine subspecialist, whose extensive research into perinatal care has changed practice around the timing of births in Australia and internationally.

He is Director of Women and Babies Research, a collaboration between the University of Sydney, the Kolling Institute and NSLHD, based at the Royal North Shore Hospital campus. Professor Morris leads a perinatal research team that extends from basic science to population health, conducting crucial research into the cause, prevention and management of pregnancy complications to improve outcomes for pregnant mothers and babies. With more than 20 years' experience caring for women with high-risk pregnancies, his research is driven by a desire to ensure all women get the best pregnancy care regardless of their location or circumstances.

Professor Morris' research has helped to change global practice and national thinking about the timing of birth.

In the face of a dramatic rise in the proportion of births taking place prior to 39 or 40 weeks by induction or caesarean – largely due to factors such as convenience and choice – he embarked on wide-ranging research into maternal and infant outcomes of early birth. Through the linkage of large population health records, this research identified the growth and development that takes place in the fetus between 34–40 weeks gestation and highlighted the importance of the last few weeks of pregnancy.

In 2020, Professor Morris launched [Every Week Counts](#), a website to educate both health professionals and expectant parents about the benefits of full-term gestation.

It outlines evidence showing that babies born even a few weeks early face both short- and long-term risks, ranging from an increased risk of neonatal morbidity and mortality to poor development at school age.

This work, which features in the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care '*Atlas of Healthcare Variation*', guides best practice around birth timing.

Professor Morris' significant research contributions also include a randomised controlled trial investigating the optimal timing of delivery after a pregnant woman's membranes rupture at 34–37 weeks pregnancy. The findings, published in *The Lancet* (2016), show that rather than the long-held practice of immediate delivery, a protocol of expectant management and surveillance of mother and fetus provides benefits to the baby.

He also co-authored an influential study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (2017) which found that delaying umbilical cord clamping by one minute in preterm infants reduced neonatal mortality.

Professor Morris is currently the Maternity Lead with the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission, undertaking work to identify and address variations in maternity care and outcomes across the state.

He collaborates widely with national and international researchers, as well as with parent groups and the NSW Ministry of Health.

His service to maternal and infant health as a clinician, educator, patient advocate and researcher was recognised when he was named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2013.