



SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Expectant Mother

We are researchers from the Medical Research Council (my name is.....) and we are studying levels of pollutants in the environment and maternal health in selected areas of South Africa. Specifically, the study will be looking at the levels of pollutants in the environment and in the blood and urine of expectant mothers attending prenatal clinics in this area. Studies conducted in other parts of the world showed that in certain areas environmental pollution may have an effect on the foetus and newborns. By conducting this research in South Africa we will be able to determine the current situation in our country.

We would appreciate it very much if you agree to participate in our study. If you agree, we will be asking you to answer series of questions, which should take 35 minutes. The interview will focus on general information about yourself, including your age, health and diet, your house type, and your occupation. A trained research assistant will be interviewing you during your last visit to the antenatal clinic before delivery.

We also ask that you allow us to take a blood sample of approximately 20ml from you (4 teaspoons) once only, and to donate about 20ml of urine also during your last visit to the antenatal clinic before delivery. A professional nursing sister will take the blood sample at the clinic. Sterile, disposable equipment will be used and disposed of immediately, so there is no chance of transfer of any infection from one subject to another. The technique is safe and there is only a slight prick as the needle passes through the skin. Over the years we have sampled blood from many hundreds of people in this way without any problems. We will measure the concentration of some metals and organic chemicals in your blood and urine.

We also ask you to allow us to take 10 ml of blood sample from the cord (umbilical cord/khujwana/nkaba) after your baby is delivered. This is done only after the cord is cut so there is no interference with delivery and your baby. Doctor attending to you will do it. Cord blood will also be analyzed for chemicals.

Finally we also ask your permission to obtain information from hospital records about your baby's weight and length, sex and gestational age, and health.

We do not know at this stage if this study will have a direct benefit to you, but if we find anything wrong with your results, we will come back to you. The results of this study will be published, but the names of you or your child will not be mentioned. You may request the results in relation to yourself and your child.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason. Remember that your participation in the study is completely voluntary and not taking part in it, or withdrawing from it, carries no penalty of any sort. Your health care will not be influenced.

If you would like to discuss the study further, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact, Dr Halina Röllin, telephone: 011 643 8461 during office hours.