

Study gives bubs hope on seizures

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AUSTRALIAN scientists have discovered a way to treat seizures in newborns that will not only help protect their developing brain from further injury, but may also provide the first new, safe and effective treatment in decades.

A team at the Hudson Institute of Medical Research's Ritchie Centre and Monash University's Department of Pediatrics and Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology has just published the results of their groundbreaking study in the *Annals of Neurology*.

In this preclinical study, the team found an existing synthetic drug called ganaxolone – now used internationally to treat epilepsy in adults and young children – may also help improve seizure management in babies under four weeks of age. Seizures are more common in the neonatal period than at any other stage of life.

Senior author Dr Tamara Yawno-Fegan said about 10 per cent of newborns with neurological disorders in Australia were diagnosed with seizures every year. She said this study provided hope of a potential alternative treatment, with the study giving strong evidence ganaxolone not only reduced seizure burden, but also protected the developing brain.
