



BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY RESEARCH SEMINARS 2017

Thursday 2nd March 4pm

Jean Martin Room

Level 3 Beryl Rawson Building 13

MEGAN O'DONNELL

Australian National University

The Phoenix Cohort: The effects of bushfire stress in utero



Previous research indicates that birth outcomes, such as gestational age, birth weight and secondary sex ratio, alter following environmental disasters due to the effects of maternal stress. My study examines the effects of two Australian bushfires, the 2009 Black Saturday fires and the 2003 Canberra fires, on the secondary sex ratio, average birth weight and average gestational age of babies born to mothers who lived in bushfire-affected areas. This quantitative study is further supported by interviews and surveys conducted with women who were pregnant during bushfires. This

presentation discusses some of the key outcomes of this work.

Megan's doctoral work examines the health effects of bushfire exposure on mothers and children. She completed a Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) in 2002 and a Master of Culture, Health and Medicine at the ANU in 2012. Megan has also worked in health research and for government in the areas of environmental protection, disaster response, and public health. Recently, she has published a several papers with Dr Alison Behie on the effects of bushfires and other stressors on foetal development.

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