

# ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH  
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY  
*to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children*

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **HEALTH SYSTEM ALERTS MAY IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE: STUDY**

Electronic alerts on patients' medical records may improve responses to children and pregnant women at risk of violence, abuse or neglect, an Australian-first study funded by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) has found.

As part of the study, 180 NSW health workers were asked to assess the impact of "Child-at-Risk" alerts on the way they responded to children and pregnant women presenting through the health system. The alerts are applied to patients' electronic medical records by staff who have identified and reported risks to child wellbeing.

Around three-quarters of study participants agreed or strongly agreed that the alerts helped improve health worker responses to at-risk clients.

Over one third of health workers surveyed reported that they had changed their approach to working with a patient after seeing an alert on a patient record.

ANROWS CEO Dr Heather Nancarrow said that health professionals are often the first people to respond to victims and survivors of violence, abuse or neglect.

"Having access to relevant information about a client's safety and wellbeing, through alerts such as these, can lead to better outcomes for women and children at risk," Dr Nancarrow said.

"When a health professional sees an alert, they can respond by sharing information with the client, conducting safety planning or providing a referral to a relevant support service."

The collaborative, service-led research was conducted by Northern New South Wales Local Health District (NNSW LHD), headed up by early career researcher Rosemaria Flaherty, and University of South Australia. The Research Report, *Examining the power of Child-At-Risk electronic medical record (eMR) alerts to share interpersonal violence, abuse and neglect*

*concerns: Do child protection alerts help?*, is available via the ANROWS website (<https://www.anrows.org.au/node/1428>).

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