



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA



**For immediate release**

**New research links infant wheezing to long-term health**

**WINNIPEG, MB (8 February 2016)**

A study by researchers at the University of Manitoba and The University of British Columbia published today online in *JAMA Pediatrics* provides important new insights into preventing asthma in children. Asthma affects over 500,000 Canadian children and is the most common reason for children to miss school or be admitted to hospital. It accounts for over 30 per cent of Canadian healthcare billings for children.

Wheezing is frequent among babies and young children and this study focuses on the long-term implications of wheezing in early life, using data from the Canadian Asthma Primary Prevention Study (CAPPS).

The study followed 320 children born in Winnipeg and Vancouver at the St. Boniface, Health Sciences Centre and BC Children's Hospitals from before birth until adolescence and found that specific patterns of wheezing were associated with decreased lung function and increased risk of asthma by age 15. Children who wheezed consistently through infancy and early childhood had the worst lung function and the highest asthma risk at age 15. However, even children who wheezed only "transiently" as babies had reduced lung function and increased asthma risk as teenagers.

According to lead author Dr. Meghan Azad, assistant professor in pediatrics & child health, College of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba, this research could have positive implications for younger patients.

"Our research shows that asthma-associated deficits in lung function are already present at a very young age, suggesting that interventions to reduce early-life wheezing could have significant long-term health benefits," said Azad, also research scientist at the Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba. "Although many treatments exist to manage asthma symptoms, it is a lifelong disease and there is no cure. Prevention is the best approach to reduce the global burden of asthma, and our study provides important new information to inform asthma prevention strategies."

The study published by *JAMA Pediatrics* can be viewed [here](#).

- 30 -

**For more information and to arrange interviews please contact:**

**Ilana Simon**

Director of Communications & Marketing, Faculty of Health Sciences

University of Manitoba

204-789-3427, (cell) 204-295-6777

[ilana.simon@umanitoba.ca](mailto:ilana.simon@umanitoba.ca)