

Researchers were able to look at specific populations such as pregnant women who represent an important population for laboratory testing. Routine testing for infectious diseases, including hepatitis B, syphilis, and rubella, is typically done early in pregnancy. “While testing rates are high in Manitoba, the birth outcomes and long-term child health outcomes for women who are not tested can now be studied in the future, by linking the Cadham Provincial Laboratory data to other administrative databases in our data repository at MCHP,” says Lix.

The report shows the new data at MCHP is a valuable tool for public health and other health services researchers to use. Future studies can focus on specific demographics where the results could provide useful evidence for health officials to target programs and policies for at-risk Manitobans.

For example, outbreaks of infectious respiratory diseases, like influenza, in long-term care facilities can be costly and disruptive and can negatively affect the health of residents says Lix. “By using Cadham Provincial Laboratory data linked to other administrative data, new opportunities could emerge to better understand the spread of diseases in these facilities, identify facilities that are successful in avoiding outbreaks, and examine the cost effectiveness of resident immunization programs.”

MCHP is a research unit in the Department of Community Health Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. Research scientists and their collaborators at MCHP study health services, population and public health, and the social determinants of health using data from the entire population of Manitoba. Most of the research answers questions of interest to policy makers based on a formal association with Manitoba Health and input from other government departments.

Media note: Dr. Lisa Lix is available for interviews.

For more information, please contact Jack Rach, communications officer, Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, at: 204-789-3669.

The summary and full report will be available for download on December 3 from <http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/deliverablesList.html>