



23 July 2018



Dear

Re: OIA request – Assisted deliveries and caesarean section births

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 5 July 2018 seeking information related to assisted delivery and caesarean section births of Waitemata District Health Board (DHB).

On 6 July, the DHB contacted you to clarify the information being sought and you confirmed that you were seeking data about babies who were injured or died as a result of instrumental or caesarean birth. You further confirmed your request was not seeking details of babies delivered using these techniques but died or were injured due to unrelated illness, congenital abnormality or other cause.

- 1) *The number of babies injured or who died during birth at Waitemata District Health Board when assisted delivery was used*
In the past five years, no babies have died and six babies have been injured as a result of an assisted birth.
- 2) *Please provide the same number for c-section births. (If ventouse or forceps were used in c-section please state).*
In the past five years, no babies died and three babies were injured as a result of a caesarean birth. Instruments were not used in these cases.
- 3) *In the case of injuries, please state what the injuries were or the seriousness of the injuries (separate out by type of birth e.g. ventouse, forceps, c-section, all of the above).*

Ventouse - subgaleal haemorrhage
Ventouse - subgaleal haemorrhage
Emergency caesarean - fractured humerus
Ventouse - subgaleal haemorrhage
Ventouse - subgaleal haemorrhage
Emergency caesarean – fractured skull
Ventouse - subgaleal haemorrhage
Ventouse - fractured humerus
Elective caesarean - fractured femur

- 4) *In the case of injuries, please state if the baby survived past 30 days.*
All babies survived.

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- 5) *In the case of injuries, please state whether the baby spent time in a neonatal unit as a result and if so how long.*

Of the nine babies, four spent time in our Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU). The average length of stay in SCBU was 2.6 days. However, the time in SCBU may not have been in relation to the injury.

- 6) *Please state the cost of any injuries to the DHB. For example baby required surgery or extensive stay in neonatal care etc.*

We have not been able to extract the cost of the injury over the cost of care that would usually have been delivered when other co-morbidities are taken into consideration, such as hypoglycaemia, jaundice and prematurity, which are common in newborns and frequently result in a longer length of stay.

- 7) *Please state if the mother was injured in any of the deliveries and if so please type of intervention.*

Injury to mothers were rare. One woman sustained vaginal trauma and urinary retention, which was consistent with a difficult birth.

- 8) *In the case of injury or death what action was taken - e.g. complaint to HDC, coroner's inquest, recorded as serious and sentinel event, internal review, apology, change of process/procedure etc.*

None of these incidents resulted in a complaint to the HDC and none were coronial inquests as all babies survived. All were investigated as adverse events and some parents received an apology in person and some in writing. In the case of the sub-galeal haemorrhages, internal procedures have changed so that babies receive closer monitoring following a ventouse birth.

These incidents reflect a small number of cases in a total of over 30,000 births at Waitemata DHB during the five years covered by your request. Whilst any injury to a baby is concerning on occasion clinicians are required to make difficult, rapid decisions between the possible risk of physical injury against the possible risk of brain injury that may result if the baby is left in a compromised situation.

I trust that this information meets your requirements. Waitemata DHB, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare.

This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely



Cath Cronin
Director Hospital Services
Waitemata District Health Board