

Medical Record Audit of Planned Home Births at CYWHS March 2009 – September 2010

Background

Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) has been a service offered by CYWHS (WCH Women's and Babies Division) since 2004. MGP is a midwifery caseload model of care offering women continuity of midwifery care throughout pregnancy, birth and the early postpartum period. Women can self-select for participation after being informed about their various choices of care at their first antenatal visit.

Planned Home Birth commenced on 1 February 2009 as an extended service of MGP. Once again women self-select for this service but need to meet strict criteria to be eligible. This criteria along with other preparations required for a home birth are outlined in the CYWHS Nursing & Midwifery Clinical Standard *Planned Labour and Birth at Home* (June 2009) and the SA Department of Health *Policy for Planned Birth at Home in South Australia* (July 2007).

The CYWHS Home Birth Implementation and Evaluation Committee oversee the evaluation of the Planned Home Birth Service being offered by CYWHS. As a component of the evaluation the medical record of women who have a planned labour and birth at home will be audited for compliance against the Department of Health *Policy for Planned Birth at Home in South Australia* (July 2007). This process audit will be ongoing and is a requirement of SA Health. The results of the audit from March 2009 until September 2010 are summarised in this report.

Method

An audit tool was designed to ensure all key aspects of the Department of Health *Policy for Planned Birth at Home in South Australia* (July 2007) were identified as audit criteria and collated into 7 items. Ethical approval for the audit was provided by the CYWHS Human Research Ethics Committee. The first version of the audit was approved by the Home Birth Implementation and Evaluation Committee for an audit trial on 3 sets of medical records of women who had participated in the planned home birth service. Following some adjustments a second version was then approved by the Committee. An additional 8th item, the *Conditions of Participation Form* was added to the audit from June 2010. This form was developed in response to a CYWHS directive to clearly document the "Exclusion Criteria" and the "Checklist for Women in MGP requesting Home Birth" following the midwife's discussion with a woman who was considering a planned home birth

The audits are ideally undertaken by a nursing or midwifery CYWHS staff member who does not provide direct care to these women. For the most part they have been conducted by Dr Jenny Fereday from the Department of Nursing and Midwifery Research and Practice Development or Anita Conroy from the Clinical Governance Unit.

In some instances where one or two documents were missing the medical record was re-audited at a later date or the MGP Clinical Service Coordinators (CSC) were asked to follow-up. In most cases the missing form was either incorrectly filed or was yet to be filed as it was still in use for the 6 week postnatal visits (eg *Appendix C – Planned Home Birth Checklist for the Qualified Practitioners*)

Sample

From 2 March 2009 until 1 September 2010, a total of 54 medical records have been audited. Of this number:

- 46 women birthed at home and remained home
- 8 women transferred in to WCH during labour or immediately after the birth.

Some women were planning a homebirth but did not meet the eligibility criteria prior to the onset of labour and therefore were ineligible for a homebirth and not included in the medical record audit.

Results

Results from the audits are tabled below according to the 8 items on the audit tool. The audits have been separated into two groups:

- Birth at Home Group (Table 1) including only women who birthed at home and did not transfer to the hospital, and;
- Transfer to Hospital Group (Table 2) including women who did transfer to WCH following onset of labour or immediately after birth.

Table 1 - Results for Birth at Home Group

		YES	NO	N/A - No Response	Comment	Total
1	The Dept of Health "Planned Birth at Home Information Brochure" (consent form) is signed and in case notes prior to labour commencing and verified by reviewing the case notes	45	1			46
2	Appendix C Dept of Health "Policy Planned Birth at Home in SA" 2007 is complete and verified by reviewing the case notes	43	3			46
3	Equipment packs as per Appendix A and Oxygen as per Appendix B were at the woman's home by 37 weeks of her pregnancy. Appendix A and B of Dept of Health "Policy for Planned Birth at Home in SA" 2007	46				46
4	Two practitioners with at least one midwife accredited to the Dept of Health "Policy Planned Birth at Home in SA" 2007 present at birth	40	6			46
5	a) Did the woman labour in water?	29	17			46
	b) Did the woman birth in water?	24	22			46
	c) Was the water birth consent signed?	32	3	11	Consent signed but did not birth in water	46

Table 1 continued- Results for Birth at Home Group

		YES	NO	N/A - No Response	Comment	Total
6	Did the woman transfer to the WCH during her planned birth at home? If yes:		46			46
	Was ambulance required?		2	-	Called but not required when arrived	-
	Time ambulance was notified		-	-		-
	Arrival of ambulance at women's home		-	-		-
	Time of arrival at WCH		-	-		-
	Reason for transfer		-	-		-
7	"The woman's SA Pregnancy Record, the checklist available as Appendix C and further documentation on the pregnancy and birth has been filed in the woman's health unit case notes" Section 13.18 Dept of Health "Planned Birth at Home in SA 2007"	42	4			46
8	Conditions of participation	23	3		Item added later in audit (June 2009)	26

Table 2 - Results for Transfer to Hospital Group

		YES	NO	N/A - No Response	Comment	Total
1	The Dept of Health "Planned Birth at Home Information Brochure" (consent form) is signed and in case notes prior to labour commencing and verified by reviewing the case notes	6	2			8
2	Appendix C Dept of Health "Policy Planned Birth at Home in SA" 2007 is complete and verified by reviewing the case notes	4	4			8
3	Equipment packs as per Appendix A and Oxygen as per Appendix B were at the woman's home by 37 weeks of her pregnancy. Appendix A and B of Dept of Health "Policy for Planned Birth at Home in SA" 2007	8				8
4	Two practitioners with at least one midwife accredited to the Dept of Health "Policy Planned Birth at Home in SA" 2007 present at birth	1		7	Transfer after birth	8

Table 2 continued - Results for Transfer to Hospital Group

		YES	NO	N/A - No Response	Comment	Total
5	a) Did the woman labour in water?	5	2	1		8
	b) Did the woman birth in water?	1		7		8
	c) Was the water birth consent signed?	4		4	Consent signed but did not birth in water	8
6	Did the woman transfer to the WCH during her planned birth at home? If yes:	7	1		Labour not established	8
	Was ambulance required?	3	4	1		8
	Time ambulance was notified				Information noted and in discussion section of this report	
	Arrival of ambulance at women's home					
	Time of arrival at WCH					
	Reason for transfer					
	Ambulance cover					
7	"The woman's SA Pregnancy Record, the checklist available as Appendix C and further documentation on the pregnancy and birth has been filed in the woman's health unit case notes" Section 13.18 Dept of Health "Planned Birth at Home in SA 2007"	4		4	Not complete due to t/f to WCH	8
8	Conditions of participation	5		3	Item added later in audit (June 2009)	8

Discussion

Consent for Planned Birth at Home

All women should have had a signed consent for a home birth even if they transferred in to Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) during labour. The Department of Health *Planned Birth at Home Information Brochure* (consent form) is required to be signed prior to labour commencing. In the "Birth at Home Group" one consent was not located in the notes although it was written in the SA Pregnancy Health Record progress notes that the consent had been signed. In the "Transfer to Hospital Group" two consents were not located in the notes. This resulted in an overall 5.55% (3 consents) failure to comply with this item.

Appendix C – Planned Home Birth Checklist for the Qualified Practitioners

The checklist includes “Information for Women” and “Actions” items that need to be undertaken by the Midwife and signed. The Checklist covers actions for the antenatal, labour and post-partum periods. This form was missing from the notes of 3 women that birthed at home and 4 (50%) of women who birthed in hospital. It would only be expected to be completed in full for the “Birth at Home Group”. As the checklist should be commenced in the antenatal period then it would be expected to be partially completed (and filed) for the “Transfer to Hospital Group” but the ‘Actions after Birth’ section would be not completed as this information is replicated in hospital-based forms.

Overall Appendix C was not filed in a total of 7 medical records (13%). This is possibly due to partially completed forms for “Transfer to Hospital Group” not being filed as it is a form that remains with the midwife during the postnatal period which possibly increases the risk of the form being misplaced.

Equipment required for a Planned Birth at Home

The Department of Health *Policy for Planned Birth at Home in SA 2007* states the equipment packs (as per Appendix A) and Oxygen (as per Appendix B) are to be in the woman's home by 37 weeks of her pregnancy (gestation when eligibility for home birth is met). This occurred in 100% of cases for both the “Birth at Home Group” and the “Transfer to Hospital Group”. In some cases the equipment was delivered just after 37 weeks but this coincided with the women’s decision to opt for a planned home birth. The delivery of equipment was generally documented in the progress notes of the SA Pregnancy Record as well as Appendix C Checklist.

Presence of two registered practitioners for the birth

Two registered practitioners are required to be present at birth with at least one midwife accredited to the Department of Health *Policy for Planned Birth at Home in SA 2007*. This did not occur in 6 births in the “Birth at Home Group” but it was clearly documented that the midwife arrived 5-10 minutes after the birth. In all cases labour had progressed more rapidly than was anticipated. As expected for the “Transfer to Hospital Group” this was not applicable, however one woman in this group transferred after birth and 2 practitioners were present at the birth.

Labour and birth in water

The *Consent for Labour and Birth in Water* is part of the SA Department of Health policies “First Stage Labour in Water” and “Birth in Water”. As noted in the table some women signed a consent but did not labour and/or birth in water (n=7). Of the women who did labour and/or birth in water 6 (11%) did not have a signed consent filed in the medical record. Of this 6 women 3 had laboured but not birthed in water and 3 had laboured and birthed in water.

Transferred to hospital during planned birth at home

An ambulance was called for two women in the “Birth at Home Group” as a precaution (eg baby ‘flat’ at birth) but neither women required transfer following the arrival of the ambulance as the situation was rectified. Of the 8 women who were in the “Transfer to Hospital Group” only 3 required an ambulance and for all 3 women the ambulance arrived in 7 minutes or less. The reason for transfer into WCH included lack of progress in 1st stage of labour, signs of in foetal distress with and an epidural requested. All women had ambulance cover.

All documents filed in case notes

The number of non-compliant records coincides with the number of the Department of Health *Planned Birth at Home Information Brochure* (consent form) and *Planned Home Birth Checklist for the Qualified Practitioners* (Appendix C) that were not filed in the case notes in the "Birth at Home Group". The "Transfer to Hospital Group" did not always have all the planned home birth documentation completed, however this would be expected as following the transfer to WCH the forms required would be those used within the hospital setting.

Conditions of participation

This item was added to the audit from June 2010. This form documents the Exclusion Criteria and the Checklist for Women in MGP requesting Home Birth. In subsequent audits it would be expected to have this form filed in all medical records of women participating in the planned home birth service.

Conclusion

Overall the results indicate a high degree of compliance with the Department of Health *Policy for Planned Birth at Home in SA 2007* however 100% for all items on the audit have not been achieved. Documentation was more likely to be omitted in the records of women who transferred into the WCH during labour. Although these women continue to be cared for within the MGP service there is a change to WCH hospital forms. Some Planned Home Birth forms would be expected to have been completed (and filed) despite the transfer during labour. For example The Department of Health *Planned Birth at Home Information Brochure* Consent form and the *Consent for Labour and Birth in Water* (as appropriate) and the antenatal sections of the *Planned Home Birth Checklist for the Qualified Practitioners* (Appendix C) provide evidence of midwifery care and consultation during the antenatal period when a home birth was being planned.

Outcomes

Proposed Actions	Person(s) responsible	Time frame
Feedback to MGP midwives re audit results	Jenny Fereday and/or MGP CSCs	October / November 2010
Devise a list of forms required for a Planned Home Birth that need to be completed and filed in the woman's medical record even if she transfers into WCH during labour.	MGP CSCs	October / November 2010
Aim for 100% for all items in subsequent audits	Jenny Fereday / Anita Conroy or delegate	March 2011

Report prepared by

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