



Midwifery Bulletin

September 2024

The aim of this monthly current awareness bulletin is to provide a digest of recent news, guidelines, reports and research concerning all aspects of Midwifery.

If you would like to request any of the research articles included in this bulletin, or to be put onto the bulletin's distribution list, please contact:

Library and Knowledge Services at Pilgrim Hospital

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News, Guidelines and Reports

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ): [Nonpharmacologic Treatments for Maternal Mental Health Conditions](#)

British Association of Perinatal Medicine: [Recognising Uncertainty: an integrated framework for palliative care in perinatal medicine A BAPM Framework for Practice](#)

Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership:

- [Evaluating hospital and crisis care for perinatal mental health](#)
- [Perinatal mortality surveillance report \(MBRRACE-UK\)](#)

Maternal Mental Health Alliance and REFORM: [Listening to the stories of women who have experienced child removal due to drug and alcohol use](#)

NHS Employers: [Support information for international nurses and midwives](#)

NHS Providers: [What are the enablers for improving outcomes and reducing inequalities in maternal and neonatal care?](#)

Nursing & Midwifery Council: [The Nursing and Midwifery Council Independent Culture Review](#)

Royal College of Nursing: [Multiple births – midwife standard](#)

Maternity services and workforce

NIHR Senior Research Leader Programme for nurses and midwives

The [NIHR's Senior Research Leader Programme](#) helps nurses and midwives develop their research leadership skills to improve research in their organisations and beyond.



A mixed-methods stress audit with midwives in the United Kingdom | Women and Birth, 37, 101639

This study offered a comprehensive and novel insight into the stress experiences of UK midwives, highlighting targets for future stress management interventions, including key stressors (e.g., manager support), underlying mechanisms (e.g., stress appraisals), and “at-risk” groups (e.g., night shift workers). Practical recommendations are provided for stakeholders operating at multiple levels (e.g., midwife, trust, policy) to better support midwives with work-related stress.

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Novel solutions to the midwifery retention crisis in England: an organisational case study of midwives’ intentions to leave the profession and the role of retention midwives | Midwifery, 138, 104152

The aim of this article is to explore the views of midwives regarding their intentions to leave or stay within one English organisation and to provide insights into the perceived impact of the role of retention midwives.

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Threat to low-risk birth environments | British Journal of Midwifery, 32(6), 328-331.

The effect of the current staffing crisis on low-risk birth environments is discussed, with its impact on maternal and fetal health highlighted. Because of staffing problems across the UK, there are times that despite everyone's best efforts, a midwifery-led unit may be closed or home birth services not always available. The potential consequences for midwifery skills is also discussed.

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Maternal health inequalities

Black Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week – September 2024

<https://themothhoodgroup.org/bmmhw24/>

Smoking during pregnancy: latest data | British Journal of Midwifery, 32(5), 221.

Editorial highlights how smoking during pregnancy can have significant consequences for mother and baby, and increases the risk of stillbirth, miscarriage and preterm birth but can also have long term impact putting babies and children at increased risk of asthma, chest and ear infections, as well as psychological problems.

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Maternal mental health

Understanding the maternal brain in the context of the mental load of motherhood | Nature Mental Health, 2(7), 764–772.

This review discusses the key factors that comprise the mental load of motherhood and the need to provide support for a healthy transition to motherhood.

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Antenatal care

COVID-19 vaccination and birth outcomes of 186,990 women vaccinated before pregnancy: an England-wide cohort study | The Lancet Regional Health – Europe 2024

We found evidence that pregnancies starting within 12 months from a first COVID-19 vaccination, experienced fewer adverse birth outcomes. An mRNA vaccine should be preferred to a viral-vector vaccine, to minimise safety issues. The venous thromboembolism risk of the viral-vector vaccine was substantially lower compared to that attributable to SARS-CoV-2 infection in pregnancy.

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Daily oral iron supplementation during pregnancy | Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2024, 8, CD004736.

Iron and folic acid supplementation have been recommended in pregnancy for anaemia prevention, and may improve other maternal, pregnancy, and infant outcomes.

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Vitamin D supplementation for women during pregnancy | Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2024, 7, CD008873.

Vitamin D supplementation during pregnancy may help improve maternal and neonatal health outcomes (such as fewer preterm birth and low birthweight babies) and reduce the risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes (such as severe postpartum haemorrhage).

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Fundamentals

The cardiovascular system and associated disorders | British Journal of Midwifery, 32(9), 506-514

This series of three articles will explore the fundamentals related to anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology in relation to three important topics: the cardiac system, the respiratory system and the endocrine system. This first article explores the maternal cardiovascular system, outlining its anatomy and the key physiological adaptations of pregnancy, and summarising pathophysiological conditions that may occur.

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Pregnancy complications

Antiseizure medication use during pregnancy and neonatal growth outcomes: A systematic review and meta-analysis. British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, 90(8), 1827-1837.

We aimed to systematically synthesize the current published literature on neonatal growth outcomes associated with antiseizure medication (ASM) use during pregnancy.

An international consensus on the use of asthma biologics in pregnancy | Lancet Respiratory Medicine, August 28th 2024



Uncontrolled asthma is associated with an increased risk of adverse perinatal outcomes. Asthma biologics reduce exacerbation frequency, are steroid sparing, and improve quality of life in people with severe asthma.

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Clinical significance of true umbilical cord knot: a propensity score matching study | BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, 24:59

True umbilical cord knot (TUCK) is a rare finding that often leads to intensified surveillance and patient anxiety. This study sought to evaluate the incidence, risk factors, and obstetric and neonatal outcomes of TUCK.

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Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Treatment and Hypertensive Adverse Outcomes in Pregnancy: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis | JAMA Network Open, 7(8), e2427557.

These findings suggest that implementing CPAP treatment in pregnant women with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) may reduce the risk of gestational hypertension and preeclampsia.

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Delivering care to women with congenital heart disease: the role of clinical nurse specialist | British Journal of Midwifery, 32(6), 318-326.

Congenital heart disease is now the most common reason for women to attend a high-risk joint cardiac–obstetric clinic. Clinical nurse specialists in particular play a crucial role in coordinating, supporting, educating and advocating for the mother and fetus through preconception, pregnancy, the puerperium and beyond.

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Development and validation of prediction models for fetal growth restriction and birthweight: an individual participant data meta-analysis | Health Technology Assessment, 28(47), 1-119.

The International Prediction of Pregnancy Complications-fetal growth restriction and International Prediction of Pregnancy Complications-birthweight models accurately predict fetal growth restriction and birthweight for various assumed gestational ages at delivery. These can be used to stratify the risk status at booking, plan monitoring and management.

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Gestational diabetes: addressing health inequalities and barriers to identification | British Journal of Healthcare Management, 30(8), 1-3.

Discusses barriers to the identification of gestational diabetes and how these relate to health inequalities, suggesting that a compassionate, inclusive approach using quality improvement methodologies could help to address these issues.

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Magnesium Sulfate Before Preterm Birth for Neuroprotection: An Updated Cochrane Systematic Review | Obstetrics & Gynecology, 144(2), 161-170.

Magnesium sulfate for preterm fetal neuroprotection reduces cerebral palsy and death or cerebral palsy for children. Further research is required on longer-term benefits and harms for children, effect variation by participant and treatment characteristics, and the generalizability of findings to low- and middle-income countries.

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Labour and childbirth

A deep learning method for locating fetal heart rate decelerations during labour using crowd-sourced data | Expert Systems With Applications, 255, 124609

In this study, we designed a website to crowd-source data from clinical professionals at their convenience. This data was combined with that from other publicly available sources to produce a dataset that was used to train a convolutional auto-encoder to locate decelerations

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At any cost: a paradigm shift in the culture of caesarean section rate monitoring in the United Kingdom | Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 44(1), 2320840

Recent reviews into maternity safety in the United Kingdom (UK) have led to a paradigm shift in culture and policy around caesarean section (CS) rate monitoring.

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Epidural analgesia in labour and the risk of emergency caesarean: a retrospective observational study | British Journal of Midwifery, 32(8), 404-411.

Personal research exploring discrepancy between a Cochrane review and the author's personal clinical experience. This retrospective service evaluation of mode of birth in 200 consecutive labours with and without epidural analgesia revealed a more than two-fold increase in the risk of emergency caesarean section in the epidural group.

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Nulliparous women's lived experiences of the prolonged passive stage of labour: A thematic analysis based on descriptive phenomenology | Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare, 41, 100985

This study highlights that women need support through information, presence, and encouragement to remain in control. It can be beneficial during birth preparation to include knowledge about the passive second stage together with unexpected or complicated situations during birth, such as prolonged labour.

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Postnatal care

Maternal postnatal care in general practice: steps forward. [Editorial] | British Journal of General Practice, 74(746), 392-393.

Women are most likely to die in the postnatal period — a lagging measure of the lack of



investment and value placed in postnatal care, and more broadly maternity services. Even more sobering, suicide is the leading cause (39%) of direct deaths from 6 weeks to 1 year after birth in the UK.

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Postnatal care of women with diabetes: a clinical update | British Journal of Midwifery, 32(9), pp. 492-497

In this article, the challenges of maternity care for women with diabetes are highlighted, and the specific midwifery role in some aspects of postnatal care is discussed. The provision of woman-centred care by midwives, together with the expert knowledge of the diabetic team, can reduce postnatal diabetic complications.

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The first 100 days after childbirth: cross-sectional study of maternal clinical events and health needs from primary care | British Journal of General Practice, 74(746), e580-e586.

Primary care services should seek to match the needs of new mothers, taking account of a high volume of contacts, for a broad range of planned and responsive care following childbirth.

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Infant feeding

'People don't talk about breastfeeding grief'

For decades, many new mothers have heard the message "breast is best". It's meant to encourage breastfeeding, but it can also create immense pressure for those who struggle with the practicalities. Some women are desperate to breastfeed but are forced, for various reasons, to stop earlier than planned. [A number of them spoke to the BBC to discuss "breastfeeding grief"](#) - a period of immense sadness, and even shame, following their decision to stop.

Neonatal care

Multidisciplinary training initiative for postnatal clinical environments to increase staff's confidence in managing babies requiring neonatal transitional care | Archives of Disease in Childhood: Education & Practice Ed., 109, 179-183.

The aim of this project was to design and deliver a multidisciplinary team-led NTC study day to address the identified training needs of staff working in postnatal clinical environments

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Strategies for cessation of caffeine administration in preterm infants | Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 7, CD015802.

Caffeine is used to reduce apnea and intermittent hypoxemia in preterm infants, but the optimal timing for discontinuation is unclear. The authors sought to evaluate early versus late caffeine discontinuation in preterm infants. Evidence is low-certainty regarding early



versus late discontinuation. Early cessation might increase intermittent hypoxemia, while later cessation likely results in fewer episodes of intermittent hypoxemia but shows little difference in other outcomes.

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Pregnancy and baby loss

The impact of midwife/nurse-led psychosocial interventions on parents experiencing perinatal bereavement: An integrative review | International Journal of Nursing Studies, 104814.

Findings demonstrate that midwife/nurse-led psychosocial interventions have the potential to improve grief, anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms and other psychosocial outcomes for parents experiencing perinatal loss. Thus, future research should consider training, workload, time cost and emotional support for midwives/nurses when developing midwife/nurse-led psychosocial interventions for parents with perinatal loss.

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