

Did You Know? Controversies in Maternal Health

Did you know? ACOG is the internationally recognized source for developing clinical guidelines and disseminating technical and scientific information for women's health care in all aspects of obstetrics and gynecology.

- 85% of women are delivered by ob-gyns, and 95% of board certified ob-gyns are members of ACOG.
- Many ob-gyns work collaboratively with certified nurse-midwives (CNMs).
- Ob-gyns use ACOG documents to guide their clinical practice.

Did you know? Hospital care for preterm babies costs approximately 25 times more than hospital care for term babies.

- In 2005, preterm birth cost the U.S. at least \$26.2 billion, \$51,600 for every infant born prematurely.¹
- Over 500,000 babies were born preterm in the US in 2008, 12.3% of births;² The cause is unknown in about half the cases.
- Preterm birth accounts for approximately 35% of all U.S. health care spending on infants and 10% for children.³
- In 2001, the average preterm/low birth weight hospitalization cost \$15,100 with a 12.9 day length of stay. The average uncomplicated newborn hospitalization cost \$600 with a 1.9 day stay.⁴
- Hospital stays for extremely preterm infants averaged \$65,600 in 2001, with a high likelihood of re-hospitalization.⁵
- Regional perinatal centers that provide care to low birth weight infants can save thousands of lives; very low birth weight infants have a 62% higher neonatal/predischarge mortality rate when born in a lower tier, less specialized, hospital, than those born at level III, the most specialized, hospitals (38% compared to 23%).⁶

Did you know? Only 0.6% of all US births are delivered in homes.

- Approximately a quarter of home births are unplanned or unattended.⁷
- Every physiologic birth can quickly require medical intervention for the mother's and baby's health; transfer to a hospital from a home may be required because of lack of progress of labor, need for pain relief, hypertension and bleeding.⁸
- Critical complications in obstetrics are difficult to recognize and effectively treat without considerable training and experience.
- Home births are performed by providers with a variety of educational levels; only a quarter of all planned home births are attended by certified nurse midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs), midwives with the highest levels of training.⁹
- Home births are associated with a 2-fold increase in neonatal death.¹⁰



Definitions

Preterm birth: a birth that occurs prior to 37 weeks gestation.

Late preterm birth: a birth that occurs between 34 and 37 weeks gestation.

Data Needs

- Causes of and ways to eliminate racial disparities in maternal and infant outcomes.
- Causes of and ways to preventive preterm birth.
- Comparative effectiveness data on maternity care.

Recommendations

1. Increase NIH funding for research to identify the causes of and effective interventions for preterm births.
2. Increase CDC funding for pre-term birth research and data collection.
3. Reauthorize the PREEMIE Act.
4. Fund a maternity Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS).
5. Promote collaborative care models that incorporate appropriately trained CNMs and CMs.
6. Require all states to mandate that maternity care providers have accredited education, professional certification and licensure recognized by ACOG and the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) in order to practice.

Footnotes

- ¹ Berhman, Richard and Adrienne Stith Butler, editors. *Preterm Birth: Causes, Consequences, and Prevention*. Institute of Medicine of the Academies. National Academies Press, DC: July, 2006
- ² Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Sutton PD, Ventura SJ, Mathews TJ, Kirmeyer S, Osterman MJK. *Births: Final data for 2008*. National vital statistics reports; vol 59 no. 1. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2010
- ³ Lewit EM, Baker LS, Corman H, Shiono PH. The direct cost of low birth weight. *Future Child* 1995;5:35–56
- ⁴ *ibid*
- ⁵ Russell, R. B., N. S. Green, C. A. Steiner, S. Meikle, J. L. Howse, K. Poschman, T. Dias, L. Potetz, M. J. Davidoff, K. Damus, and J. R. Petrini. “Cost of Hospitalization for Preterm and Low Birth Weight Infants in the United States.” *Pediatrics* 120.1 (2007): E1-E9.
- ⁶ Lasswell, SM, et. al. Perinatal regionalization for very low-birth-weight and very preterm infants: a meta-analysis. *JAMA*. 2010;304(9):992–1000, pmid:20810377.
- ⁷ MacDorman M, Menacker F, Declercq. Trends and characteristics of home and other out-of-hospital births in the United States, 1990–2006. National vital statistics reports, vol 58 no 11, Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2010.
- ⁸ Wax JR, Pinette MG, Cartin A. Home versus hospital birth—process and outcome. *Obstet Gynecol Surv* 2009;65:132–140.
- ⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. VitalStats. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/vitalstats.htm>
- ¹⁰ Wax JR, Lucas FL, Lamont M, Pinette MG, Cartin A, Blackstone DO. Maternal and newborn outcomes in planned home birth versus planned hospital births—a meta-analysis. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2010;203:243.e1-8.