

Stillbirths before 28 weeks?

The study on planned home versus planned hospital births¹ (published Sept. 15) has many strengths, but it has one glaring weakness. It fails to provide the nature and circumstances of the deaths in each group. It is widely recognized that stillbirths prior to 28 weeks are not a reflection of obstetric care. Unless and until the authors are forthcoming about the circumstances of the deaths, we need to reserve judgment about what the study really shows.

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REFERENCE

1. Janssen PA, Saxell L, Page LA, et al. Outcomes of planned home birth with registered midwife versus planned hospital birth with midwife or physician *CMAJ* 2009. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.081869

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/cmaj.081869v1#174975

DOI:10.1503/cmaj.109-2014

The author responds:

This is a population-based study¹ which used data from a provincial perinatal database with no personal identifiers. The charts and therefore the clinical details surrounding each death were not available. In Canada, stillbirth is defined as intrauterine death after 20 weeks gestation. Early neonatal death is from birth to 7 days. Together this time period is referred to as perinatal death and it is a standard mortality rate in Canada. We also examined the time period between 8 to 28 days of life and there were no deaths during this period (late neonatal period) in any of the 3 comparison groups. Following this first broad data search, the 3 groups were matched for comparison. All of the groups had to meet the eligibility requirements for home birth, regardless

of planned place of birth. Only those births that occurred between 37 + 0 weeks and < 42 weeks were included in the final analysis.

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REFERENCE

1. Janssen PA, Saxell L, Page LA et al. Outcomes of planned home birth with registered midwife versus planned hospital birth with midwife or physician *CMAJ* 2009. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.081869

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/cmaj.081869v1#178829

DOI:10.1503/cmaj.109-2015

Correction

A Sept. 1 review of the book *Death by Prescription: a Father takes on His Daughter's Killer — the Multi-billion-Dollar Pharmaceutical Industry*¹ said that the UBC Therapeutics Initiative was disbanded. In fact, a task force recommended the academic, drug-review initiative be disbanded but it was not. *CMAJ* regrets the error and apologizes for any inconvenience it may have caused.

REFERENCE

1. Perry TL. We (do not) stand on guard for thee. *CMAJ* 2009. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.091353.

DOI:10.1503/cmaj.109-2020

Letters to the editor

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