Understanding babies’ deaths in the UK: 2014

Out of over 780,000 births in 2014...

- 5,623 registered deaths of babies before, during or within the first 4 weeks of birth
- 4,633 deaths of babies born from 24 weeks of pregnancy
- 3,252 stillbirths, 1,381 neonatal deaths
  - 6 deaths for every 1,000 births

What risks do we know about babies who die before, during or shortly after birth?

- 3x higher risk twins
- 80% higher Black or Black British babies
- 60% higher Asian or Asian British babies
- 60% higher mothers aged 40 and over
- 50% higher mothers living in poverty
- 30% higher teenage mothers

What do we know about why babies die?

Causes of stillbirth

- 46% unknown causes
- 3% infections
- 4% umbilical cord
- 4% mother’s health
- 5% complications before labour
- 6% complications during labour
- 6% congenital anomalies
- 4% not reported

Causes of neonatal death

- complications after birth 31%
- congenital anomalies 28%
- born extremely early 13%
- infections 7%
- complications before labour 5%
- complications during labour 5%
- unknown causes 5%
- not reported 4%
- placental problems 2%

When do babies die?

- 1 in 3 die at term, when the baby has reached 37 weeks’ gestation
- 1 in 4 die before 28 weeks’ gestation

How do rates vary across the UK?

Local mortality rates varied across the UK even after taking into account differences in poverty, ethnicity and the age of the mother. They ranged from 4.9 to 7.1 per 1,000 births.

Post-mortem

- 9 out of every 10 families were offered a post-mortem; 4 out of every 10 families consented to post-mortem

What can we do to reduce the number of babies who die?

- Carry out local reviews of every death using a standardised process to identify local factors which may be responsible
- Establish aspirational UK targets for rates of stillbirth and neonatal deaths
- Offer a post-mortem to every family when their baby dies

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