

Vaginal birth after caesarean section: a provincial perspective

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Abstract

Vaginal birth after caesarean (VBAC) is an under-utilised mode of delivery. This audit looked at the rates of VBAC in a provincial hospital and observed much lower success rates than larger NZ centres. Previous VBAC was the only factor correlated with VBAC success. Of the women eligible for VBAC who had repeat caesarean section, 62.5% were undertaken due to maternal choice. Positive birth after caesarean initiatives should be considered for provincial centres such as Nelson.

Introduction

In New Zealand, the rate of CS has increased steadily from 11.7% in 1988 to 25.5% in 2015. Recent increases are due to an increase in elective operations.^{1,2}

In Nelson, the CS rate was 32% in 2017, with 58.1% performed electively.

VBAC attempt rates of 43-52% have been reported in two tertiary hospitals in NZ, with success rates of 59-73%.^{3,4} Positive birth after CS initiatives have been shown to improve VBAC rates. Little data exists for provincial centres.



Results

Of 81 women eligible for VBAC, 17 were successful. Of the remainder undergoing C/S, the indication in 40/64 women (62.5%) was maternal choice (Figure 1). There were no differences in age, BMI or number of previous vaginal deliveries between eligible women who achieved VBAC and those who did not. 29% (5/17) of women who had a successful VBAC had a history of a previous VBAC, compared with 0% (0/64) of women who had a repeat CS.

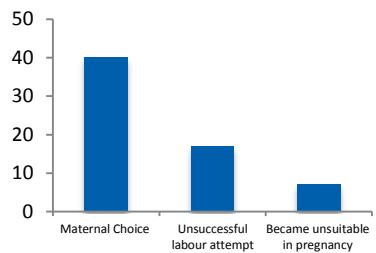


Figure 1: Indications for Repeat Caesarean Section

Methods

93 women who had a single previous CS and delivered in 2017 were included. 81 were eligible for VBAC at the beginning of their current pregnancy. Patient information was extracted from the electronic medical records system.

Conclusion

- VBAC success rates were lower than those seen in larger NZ centres.
- The majority of repeat CS were due to maternal choice.
- Positive birth after caesarean section initiatives could be considered for provincial centres like Nelson.

¹ Ministry of Health. Report on Maternity, Maternal and Newborn Information 2004. 2007. New Zealand Government.

² Ministry of Health. Report on Maternity 2015. 2017.

³ Fleming et al. National Women's Annual Clinical Report 2016. ACHB.

⁴ van der Merwe, A.M., J.H. Thompson, and A.J. Stavrou. Factors affecting vaginal birth after caesarean section at Middlemore Hospital, Auckland, New Zealand. The New Zealand Medical Journal (Online). 2013; 126(1383).