

# Obstetric Anal Sphincter Injury and Implementation of the WHA Perineal Care Bundle at a Secondary Hospital

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## Introduction

Rates of obstetric anal sphincter injuries (OASI) in Australia have been increasing. In response to this, Women's Healthcare Australasia (WHA) developed the Perineal Protection Bundle which included a range of preventative measures aimed to reduce the rates of OASI.

## Methods

A cohort study over a 2-month time period at a secondary hospital, auditing the use of preventative measures to reduce OASI. Clinicians filled out proforma's for each vaginal birth (including instrumentals) and documented aspects utilized to prevent OASI. Statistical analysis was undertaken using SAS Studio for Academics, with chi-squared and Fisher's Exact tests.

## Results

Nulliparous women were highly more likely to have reported an OASI 28% (14/49) compared with multiparous women 6% (4/66) ( $p < 0.001$ ). All WHA guidelines were followed in only 29% of cases (33/115). There was no statistically significant difference in OASI when WHA guidelines were followed (12%) (4/33) compared to when they were not followed ( $p = 0.437$ ) 17% (14/82). Warm compresses were used in 62% of deliveries (71/113), when a warm compress was used, 14% had an OASI (10/71) compared to 19% (8/42) when no warm compress was used ( $p = 0.485$ ).

Type of tear	Nulliparous	Multiparous	Total
No tear	3 (6%)	24 (27%)	27
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree	3 (6%)	18 (30%)	21
2 <sup>nd</sup> Degree	29 (59%)	20 (36%)	40
OASI	14 (28%)	4 (6%)	18
Total	49 (100%)	66 (100%)	115

## Conclusion

This rate of OASI in this study was higher than expected which may be secondary to reporting bias. The low uptake of the perineal protection bundle in our unit has demonstrated the need for further education and training of clinicians in our unit. This training is being undertaken and practice is being re-audited.