

Developing a standardised pathway for reducing and investigating stillbirths

Dr Sean Ainsworth, Consultant Neonatologist,
Dr Jennifer Boyd, Consultant Obstetrician,
Doreen Brown, Clinical Risk Midwife,
Anne Mackinnon, Senior Charge Midwife.

Description

Although Scottish stillbirth rates are falling (with the lowest recorded rate of 4.72/1000 live births in 2015) for families, it is a tragedy, with profound emotional and psychological sequelae.

Recent national perinatal reports (MBRRACE 2017, Each Baby Counts 2016) highlight the fact that in 80% of reviewed cases, different care might have made a difference.

Methodology

We focused on improvements across the following key areas:

- *Movement Matters* campaign raising awareness about altered or reduced fetal movement and increased risk of stillbirth
- Implementing a standardised pathway for women reporting altered or reduced fetal movements
- Establishing a multi-professional review group to undertake robust reviews of all stillbirths, including the parent's perspective of their care
- Sharing learning from reviews with all staff and parents.

Key Learning

- *Placental histology is useful in 'near miss' cases too.*
- *Communication between teams is essential (especially in multiple gestation).*
- *Every case should be assessed individually and delivery planned taking account of the mother's wishes.*
- *Parents should be informed of a review.*
- *Parents may wish to submit questions to be answered during the review.*
- *Parents should be informed of the outcomes of the review in plain jargon-free English.*
- *Each case should have identified persons to collate results and communicate with the parents.*

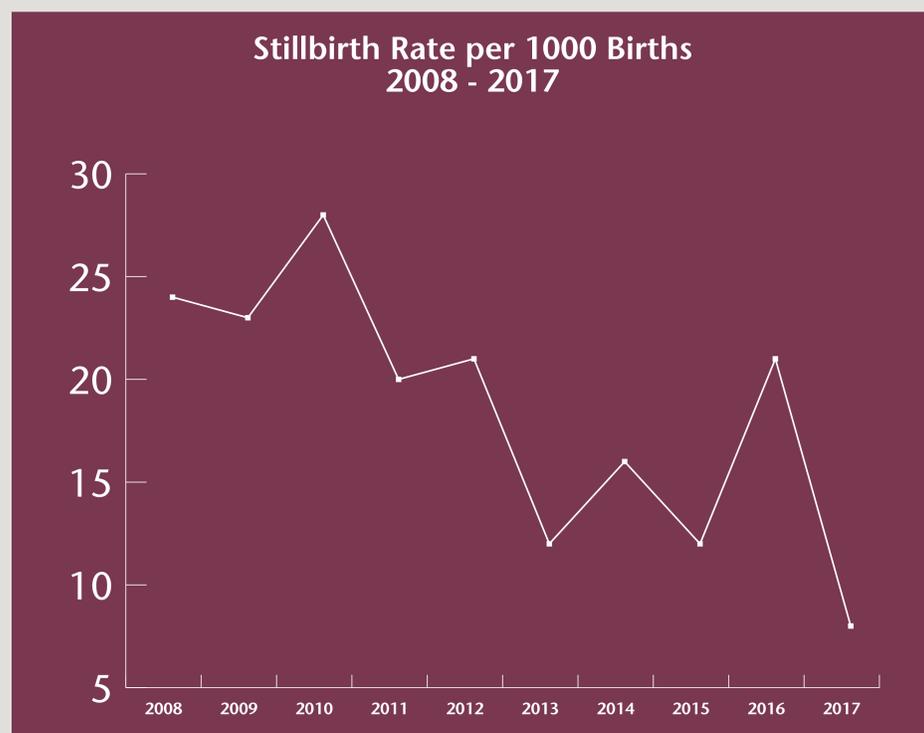


Aims/Objectives

The project aligns with local and national aims; reducing stillbirths by 35% by December 2019, alongside key recommendations from national perinatal reports to ensure all cases have a standardised review to which families can contribute and learning is shared.

Results/Outcomes

- *Improved awareness amongst women of the importance of reduced or altered fetal movement. 95% compliance with documented discussion about fetal movement.*
- *Standardised pathway of care for women presenting with concerns regarding fetal movements.*
- *All stillbirths trigger a standardised review by the Perinatal Mortality and Morbidity Group (PMMRG), including parent's perspective of care.*
- *Perinatal Matters newsletter is published quarterly to feedback learning to the wider staff across maternity and neonatal services and share messages from national reports.*
- *Local stillbirth rate in 2017 was reduced to 2.5/1000 live births.*
- *5 month period in 2017 when no family experienced a stillbirth.*



References

- 1: MBRRACE-UK, (2015) Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries across the UK. Perinatal Confidential Enquiry 2015.
- 2: Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (2015) Each Baby Counts.