

HOME BIRTH STATISTICS 1987

Before presenting the 1987 figures it is important to correct a typesetting error appearing in the November National Newsletter. The years shown were out of order and should have been as follows:

Year	1983	1984	1985	1986
Births now on record	267	368	387	534

The 1986 births had been shown as 267, so this correction should restore the picture of steadily increasing domiciliary births. The only other typesetting error was minor: anti-D was shown as 112.1% instead of 12.1%.

In 1987 the number of births continued to increase. An additional 7 forms have been received for 1986, bringing that year's total to 541. This compares with the 549 forms put on computer for 1987 to date. However in 1987 the statistics form was changed and now distinguishes between planned and unplanned hospital births. The analysis below excludes 40 planned hospital births. Because one mother had undiagnosed twins, figures relate to 529 mothers and 530 babies.

PLACE OF BIRTH	PARITY										TOT
	primip	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Home	101	147	119	69	13	5	4	1	0	0	459
Hospital	52	11	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	69
Unknown			1								1
TOTAL	153	158	122	73	13	5	4	1	0	0	529
% Transfers	34.0	7.0	1.7	5.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.0

The percentages show the proportion of women in each parity group being transferred; eg 34% of primiparas went to hospital. As in previous years, women having their first baby have a higher rate of transfer than others. Nevertheless, two out of three of these women deliver successfully at home. Listed below are complications of labour and of the puerperium - the period after birth.

COMPLICATIONS OF LABOUR	No	%	COMPLICATIONS OF PUERPERIUM	No	%
None	412	78.7	None	444	86.2
Foetal distress	20	3.8	Urinary tract infection	4	0.8
Prolonged labour	55	10.5	Genital tract infection	10	1.9
Retained placenta	8	1.5	Breast infection	30	5.8
Antepartum haemorrhage	2	0.4	Venous thrombosis	1	0.2
Postpartum haemorrhage	22	4.2	Secondary PP haemorrhage	2	0.2
Cord prolapse	0	0	Post natal depression	4	1.0
Other	31	5.7	Other	24	4.7
Not recorded	5		Not recorded	5	
Total complications	138		Total complications	75	

The percentages of mothers with each complication are also shown. As can be seen, the great majority of births were trouble free. Special note should be taken of the low incidence of post natal depression. Because midwives are in contact with the family for at least a fortnight after the birth, they are in a much better position to note any difficulties than the hospital, yet only one in a hundred mothers were noted with this symptom.

TYPE OF DELIVERY	HOME, 1987		NZ TOTAL, 1985	
	No	%	No	%
Spontaneous cephalic	482	92.0		
Spontaneous breech	3	0.6		
Forceps	21	4.0	6960	13.4
Ventouse (suction)	1	0.2	373	0.7
Elective caesarian	0	0)	
Emergency caesarian	17	3.2) 5376	10.3
Other	0	0		
Unknown	5			
Total	529		52,060	

Where available, comparable figures have been shown for the whole of New Zealand (source - Department of Health). The 1985 figures are the latest available. The percentages are of births, except that the caesarian section performed for the birth of the twins was only counted once. Low rates of intervention are an attractive feature of having a baby at home.

FACTORS ENCOURAGING MOTHERS TO HOME BIRTH

	DESIRE FOR NATURAL BIRTH		ABSENCE OF DRUGS		EFFECT ON THE BABY	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Encouraged a lot	455	89.6	337	68.5	415	83.3
Encouraged	47	9.2	96	19.5	72	14.5
Little influence	6	1.2	57	11.6	11	2.2
Discouraged	0	0	2	0.4	0	0
Unknown	21		37		31	

The amount of morbidity for the babies was also low:

NEONATAL MORBIDITY	No	%		No	%
None	470	91.4	Infection	16	3.1
Extreme prematurity	2	0.4	Birth injuries	5	1.0
Jaundice with phototherapy	13	2.5	Other	11	2.1
Unknown/not recorded	16				
Total complications	47				

The percentages recorded are percentages of babies having the problem. Generally this is a picture of trouble free birth. A sad note was the one still birth and a baby with congenital anomalies who died at six weeks. The tables below give information on breast feeding and smoking in pregnancy.

FEEDING AT TWO WEEKS	No	%	SMOKING BY THE MOTHER	No	%
Breast milk only	496	98.0	Never in pregnancy	484	92.9
Breast plus supplement	9	1.8	0-5 cigarettes/day	27	5.2
Bottle feeding	1	0.2	6-20(1 pack)/day	10	1.9
Not recorded	24		Over 1 pack/day	0	0
			Not recorded	8	

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