

Stor 23/2/83

Healthy babies

IT astounds me how the medical profession takes all the credit for our improved maternity and perinatal record. They surely realise that it is not only them and their expensive hospitals that have brought about the change.

Marie Stopes began it by teaching contraception. When I was young many mothers had a second baby 11 months after the first and large families were usual. Now more than three or four children raises eyebrows. Hence smaller families made healthier mothers and children.

Hygienic techniques and diet improved and many of the causes of death for mother or baby disappeared. Now freely available information on every aspect of pregnancy and child-birth education classes make women much more knowledgeable.

This increases their interest in the total process and they want some say in what is a natural event,

not an illness. I say that contraception, education and hygiene should be given the credit.

More and more women are requesting home births, and as women become more aware of themselves and their needs this number will increase. The result will be happy, healthy mums and families and a decrease in expensive hospital beds.

Parents seeking home births are carefully checked by doctor and midwife. They do not smoke or drink alcohol, and they take an intelligent interest in the total event. They visit their doctors regularly — they are not stupid, and accept the necessity of going to hospital when the midwife or doctor indicates it is necessary.

Really caring parents need have no fear of having a home birth. Their main problem will be finding a domiciliary midwife.

AGNES MCLEOD

Glen Innes