

HOME BIRTH STATISTICS 1988

The figures for 1988 represent both an achievement and a challenge. The achievement is a solid increase in home births. The challenge is to make the home birth option more widely available - to people outside the towns and to people of all ethnic backgrounds. Maori people are under represented in the home birth movement. The 1989 National conference is the first bicultural conference and accordingly I have compared the births of Maori mothers with those of others. The percentages are of all Maori births, all other births, and total births, to enable easy comparison.

Year	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Home births	369	387	542	596	680

The figures for 1986 and 1987 births are larger than previously published since late forms have come in. The 1987 and 1988 figures exclude planned hospital deliveries, some of which were included in earlier years.

variable	percentages			variable	percentages		
	Maori	Other	Total		Maori	Other	Total
Mothers' data							
Age: 0-14	0.0	0.2	0.2	married/de facto	85.7	92.3	91.1
15-19	2.9	0.9	1.0	tertiary education	25.3	58.4	56.6
20-24	34.3	9.2	10.5	smoker (mostly	36.4	7.2	8.6
25-29	42.8	36.6	36.9	under 5 per day)			
30-34	14.3	38.7	37.4				
35-39	5.7	13.3	12.9				
40-44	0.0	1.1	1.1				

In common with Maori people as a whole, Maori mothers can be seen to have higher risk factors although a more favourable age structure is an exception. It should be noted however that only 35 mothers are involved. So each mother makes a difference of 2.9 percent compared to 0.1 percent for others. Therefore variations due to chance are much more important.

Pregnancy data	Maori			Other	Total	Pregnancy data	Maori			Other	Total
	Maori	Other	Total				Maori	Other	Total		
hospital transfers	8.6	12.3	12.7			spontaneous onset	100.0	97.8	97.9		
procedures in labour-						type of delivery-					
no procedures	45.7	46.6	46.5			cephalic	91.4	93.4	93.3		
pain relief(drugs)	5.7	5.3	5.3			breech	0.0	0.8	0.7		
membrane rupture	20.0	14.7	15.0			forceps	5.7	2.5	2.7		
acupuncture	0.0	7.5	7.1			ventouse	2.9	0.8	0.9		
homeopathic remedy	28.6	34.8	34.5			caesarian	0.0	2.5	2.4		
episiotomy	5.7	3.3	3.4								
sutured laceration	25.7	22.2	22.4								
complications of labour-						complications of puerperium-					
none	85.7	82.2	82.4			none	91.2	88.6	88.7		
foetal distress	8.6	4.6	4.8			infection-					
prolonged labour	5.7	7.3	7.2			urinary tract	2.9	0.3	0.5		
retained placenta	0.0	0.8	0.7			genital tract	0.0	1.1	1.1		
haemorrhage-						breast infection	0.0	5.1	4.9		
antepartum	0.0	0.6	0.6			venous thrombosis	0.0	0.2	0.2		
postpartum	2.9	3.6	3.6			secondary pph	0.0	0.2	0.2		
cord prolapse	0.0	0.0	0.0			p.n. depression	0.0	1.0	0.9		
other	0.0	4.6	4.3			other	0.0	0.5	0.5		

Babies' data

males	42.9	53.7	53.1	morbidity-			
females	57.1	46.3	46.9	none	91.2	94.0	93.8
still born (1 baby)	0.0	0.2	0.1	premature (extreme)	0.0	0.5	0.4
feeding at 2 weeks-				jaundice (therapy)	0.0	1.4	1.3
breast only	97.1	98.7	98.6	infection	8.8	3.0	3.3
supplement	2.9	1.1	1.2	birth injury	0.0	0.6	0.6
bottle	0.0	0.2	0.2	other	2.9	1.6	1.6

In addition to the still birth noted above, one baby died within a week after birth.

Two observations are worth making. First, that the generally trouble free record of home births continues. Second, Maori births appear comparably trouble free, but the numbers are too small to draw general conclusions.

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