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able in the longer term

Baby clinic urged

A British paediatrician says a children's hospital with an intensive-care unit for the newly born is urgently needed in Auckland.

Professor Eric Stroud said such a centre for sick infants should be in or near the city's major hospital.

Auckland, with its 800,000 people, could have a superb children's centre equal to the best in the world, he said.

Professor Stroud, professor of paediatrics at King's College Hospital medical school at London University, said more money needed to be invested in existing neo-natal units which, he felt, were understaffed and faced shortcomings.

Children throughout the world have lost out in the allocation of money to medical services," he said.

Professor Stroud said New Zealand has become complacent about its children but added: "You're not alone in that."

The attitude seemed to be that the health of the children was good so not too much needed to be spent on child health, he said.

On home births, Professor Stroud warned women that the perinatal mortality rate would rise here if more mothers had babies at home.

"Hospitals are not filled with ogres and witches."

If women insisted on home births, they could not expect to have skilled care, Professor Stroud added.