

04 October 2019



Tēnā koe,

Intended vs actual place of birth among neonatal encephalopathy cases

Thank you for your 30 September email regarding intended place of birth for babies with Neonatal Encephalopathy (NE). Your request was:

Please kindly forward to us the NE table for "Intended Place of Birth" which is not in the released info but will have been collected. Also any other tables about NE that have not yet been released. This is an OIA request.

As you may know, the Perinatal and Maternal Mortality Review Committee (PMMRC) is not subject to the Official Information Act. As the information you request is not published data I am unfortunately unable to answer your inquiry.

I can however provide clarification as to why data on actual and intended place of birth among NE cases has not been published. I am informed that the Neonatal Encephalopathy Working Group (NEWG) reviewed Table 3.11: Actual and intended place of birth among neonatal encephalopathy cases 2012–2016 from the PMMRC 12th Annual Report¹. The NEWG and PMMRC agreed that this table does not provide any meaningful information on place of birth relating to NE. Without further analysis and case review of clinical notes, this table is open to misinterpretation. Commentary surrounding this can be found on page 97 of the recently-published PMMRC 13th Annual Report:²

There was some variation in rates of NE by the facility of birth (Figure 4.8 and Table 4.5). When examining rates of NE by the facility of birth, it is important to consider other information also. This includes where the intended place of birth was and, if transferred, when in the pregnancy or birthing process this occurred. Also important is whether the chosen facility of birth would be recommended for each particular woman and baby. This is the subject of a proposed research project by the Neonatal Encephalopathy Working Group.

¹ www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/PMMRC/Publications/12th-PMMRC-report-final.pdf

²

www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/PMMRC/Publications/13thPMMRCreport/13thPMMRCAnnualReportFINAL.pdf

As noted above, this is an area of interest to PMMRC and NEWG, and case review is needed to provide any meaningful analysis or commentary on this topic. PMMRC is currently considering proposed research on transfer in labour. This research would provide a more accurate reflection of NE rates relating to place of birth.

All other tables and figures that have been generated by the PMMRC epidemiology team are included in the 13th report.

To inform future email enquiries to PMMRC, please note that to comply with the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000,³ information that PMMRC publishes is grouped and individuals are not identifiable. The law requires PMMRC to keep all information collected private, and the committee does not report or comment on individual deaths. To ensure PMMRC is aware of all maternal mortality deaths, the Commission contacts the Ministry of Health twice a year to cross-reference deaths on PMMRC's behalf.

You have the right, by way of complaint under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982 to the Ombudsman, to seek an investigation and review of the Commission's decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802-602.

Yours sincerely



Janice Wilson (Dr)
Chief Executive

³ www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0091/latest/096be8ed817eec75.pdf