



*NATIONAL OBSTETRIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (NOIS)*

WHO-OBSQID PROJECT, MALTA

*First Quarterly Report: January to March 2002*

*Compiled by*

*DR. LINA JANULOVA MD, MSc.  
Focal Point-NOIS, Malta*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The National Statistics Office (NSO), Malta has agreed to support the National Obstetric Information System (NOIS) provided the general provisions of the Malta Statistics Authority Act, 2000 are observed (see enclosed letter).

## **ANALYSIS**

*This report analyses, the **national deliveries and births** that occurred in the first three months of this year and compares it to the same period of last year, where possible (published summary report 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2001).*

*The data in this report gives the birth statistics for all maternities (Maltese and non-Maltese) registered into the system.*

There were a total of 910 deliveries registered in the Maltese islands for the first quarter of this year, which resulted in a total of 924, births.

When comparing these figures to the same period last year one can see that the number of deliveries and consequently the births decreased by 38 and 39 respectively (deliveries:948, births:963-1<sup>st</sup> quart. '01).

## **MATERNAL AGE, MARITAL STATUS, NATIONALITY and PARITY**

The maternities have been grouped according to the standard age groupings and the frequency distribution of deliveries according to maternal age at delivery has been analysed. In the first quarter of this year, the greatest number of deliveries (40%), occurred in the age group 25 to 29 years while the lowest number of deliveries (<1% & 2%) occurred in the age group less than 15 years and 40 to 44 age groups. The minimum age of the mothers was 14 years while the maximum age was 44 years. The most frequent age at delivery was 26 years.

The grouped frequency distribution of deliveries according to maternal age are given in the table below

<i>Age grp.(yrs)</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2002</i>		<i>1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2001</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
<15	3	<1	-	-
15-19	62	7	57	6
20-24	161	18	186	20
25-29	367	40	362	38
30-34	215	24	239	25
35-39	84	9	80	8
40-44	16	2	23	2
45+	-	-	1	<1
Unspecified	2	-	-	-

For the first quarter of this year, there were 13% (123) of all deliveries that occurred to mothers who were never married (single) while 85% (770) of deliveries occurred to mothers who were married once (married, widowed, separated). The remaining 17 (2%) deliveries had no marital status specified. 96% (871) of all deliveries this quarter, occurred to women of Maltese nationality while 4% (32) were Non-Maltese. The remaining 7 deliveries were not specified.

There were 53% (481) of mothers who were primiparas while 47% (429) were multiparas in the first quarter of this year. For the same period last year the primipara and multipara rate were 49%(462) and 51% (486) respectively.

### **MATERNAL LIFESTYLES**

There were 5% (49) of mothers who smoked either 1 to 3 cigarettes or more during pregnancy in the first quarter of this year. When comparing these figures to the same quarter of 2001, it can be seen that the smoking habits of mothers decreased by 2% in this year's quarter (7% (71)-1<sup>st</sup> quart. '01).

The table below gives the smoking, alcohol and drug habits of mothers for the first quarters of 2001 and 2000.

<i>1st Quarters</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>
	No.	No.
<b><i>Cigarette smoking during pregnancy:</i></b>		
➤ 1 to 3/day	9	17
➤ >than 3/day	40	54
➤ Do not smoke	844	876
➤ Unspecified	17	1
<b><i>Alcohol consumption during pregnancy:</i></b>		
➤ Up to 1unit/day	-	-
➤ >than 1unit/day	-	1
➤ None	897	947
➤ Unspecified	13	-
<b><i>Drug Abuse during pregnancy</i></b>		
➤ Yes	-	2
➤ No	897	946
Unspecified	13	-

### **PATHOLOGY DURING PREGANANCY**

The table below gives the number of mothers for the first quarters of this year and 2001, recorded with a specific obstetric pathology during pregnancy. There were 4% of mothers who had gestational hypertention this quarter while for the same period last year this rate was at 5%.

<i>Pathology recorded during pregnancy</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2002</i>			<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2001</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Unspec.</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Unspec.</i>
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Antepartum Haemorrhage:	7	903	-	9	938	1
Gestational hypertention:	37	873	-	43	904	1
Pre-eclampsia:	8	902	-	2	945	1
Placenta praevia:	3	907	-	-	947	1
Abruption of plcenta:	-	910	-	4	942	2
Assisted fertilisation (ART):	5	905	-	3	944	1
Cardiovascular disease:	-	910	-	-	944	4

### *Diabetes in pregnancy*

*Diabetes in pregnancy is recorded into the standard NOIS sheet according to the data recorded in the 'Booking Sheet', 'The Baby Book' and the entry note by the doctor in the personal file of the mother.*

In the first quarter of this year, there was 1 mother who was registered as being Insulin Dependent Diabetic before this pregnancy and there was 1 mothers recorded with Non-Insulin Dependent diabetes. In addition, there were a total of 14 mothers registered with gestational diabetes, of these 2 were treated with insulin while the other 12 were controlled without the use of insulin.

### **ULTRASONOGRAPHY**

According to NOIS for the first quarter of this year, there were 31% (279) of mothers who had two ultrasounds carried out during pregnancy while 9% (78) had more than five scans. The table below gives the number and rate of ultrasound scan carried out during pregnancy.

<i>No of Scans</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2002</i>		<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2001</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1	137	15	192	20
2	279	31	311	33
3	237	26	210	22
4	120	13	112	12
>5	78	9	54	6
Unspecified	59	6	69	7

### **CATEGORY OF MATERNITY ACCORDING TO DELIVERY**

For the first quarter of this year, there were a total of 897 (99%) singleton, 12 (1%) twin deliveries and 1 set of triplets. When comparing these figures to last year's quarter for the same period one can see that the rate of singleton deliveries increased by 1% while that for twin delivery remained almost the same (see table below).

	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarters</i>	
	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>
<i>Category</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Singleton	897	933
Twin	12	15
Triplet	1	-
Quadruplet	-	-

### **METHOD OF BIRTH**

In the first quarter of this year, there were 72% (665) of births that were delivered by vertex delivery, 24% (223) by emergency or elective Caesarean section and 4% (36) by assisted vaginal delivery (includes forceps, ventouse and breech).

When comparing the method of birth to last year's first quarter, it can be seen that the births by vertex deliveries, Caesarean section and assisted vaginal delivery remained the same.

	1st Quarters	
	2002	2001
Method of Birth*	No.	No.
Infants delivered by vertex delivery	665	697
Infants delivered by elective CS before labour	100	112
Infants delivered by emergency CS before labour	15	11
Infants delivered by elective CS during labour	4	2
Infants delivered by emergency CS during labour	104	107
Infants delivered by forceps	7	4
Infants delivered by ventouse	29	29
Breech deliveries	-	1

Note: Data analysed according to total birth (963)

### ***BIRTHWEIGHTS AND GENDER OF BIRTHS***

In the first quarter of 2002, of the total births (924), there were 93% (863) that occurred in the birth weight range of 2500g to 4999g. While 6% (52) were in the low birth weight range of 1500g to 2499g. The remaining 1% (7) of births were of very low birth weight (500g to 1499g). When comparing these birthweights to the same period last year, it can be seen that the rates this year remain unchanged (see table below).

Birthweight(g)	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2002	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2001
<500g	-	-
500-1499g	7	9
1500-2499g	52	47
2500-4999g	863	904
5000+	1	-
Unspecified	1	3
Average Birthweight	3245	3251

The male and female distribution of births in the first quarter of 2002 was 473 and 451 respectively.

### ***OUTCOME OF BIRTH***

The number of live births for the first quarters of this year and last year were 921 and 959 respectively which accounted for 99% of the total birth rate at a national level (see table below).

Outcome of Birth	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2002	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2000
Babies alive after 28 days	916	957
Stillbirths	3	4
Early Neonatal deaths	5	2
Late Neonatal deaths	-	-

### ***BREAST FEEDING WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF DELIVERY***

In the first quarter of this year there were 20% of infants that were breast fed within 30 minutes of birth while 80% were not breast fed. When comparing these figures to

last years first quarter, one can see that there was an 18% decrease in the number of infants who were breast fed within 30 minutes of birth.

Breast feeding within 30mins. of delivery	<i>1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2002</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2001</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Infants breast fed	186	463
Infants not breast fed	737	499
Unspecified	1	1

#### ***INFANT FEEDING METHODS AT DISCHARGE***

Infant feeding habits are recorded by hospital staff at the time of discharge, little can be said on the actual infant feeding habits from the numbers given below as these may change soon after discharge from the birthing facilities.

Infant feeding methods at time of discharge	<i>1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2002</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2001</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Breast only	355	497
Bottle only	423	339
Mixed (Breast & Bottle)	126	84
Other	4	2
Unspecified	16	41