



NATIONAL OBSTETRIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (NOIS)

MALTA

Fourth Quarterly Report: October to December 2002

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ANALYSIS

This report analyses, the national deliveries and births that occurred in the fourth quarter 2002 and compares it to the same period of 2001, where possible (published summary report 4th quarter 2001).

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

There were a total of 1037 deliveries registered in the Maltese islands for the fourth quarter of 2002, which resulted in a total of 1050 births.

When comparing these figures to the same period in 2001, one can see that the number of deliveries and consequently the births increased by 41 and 42 respectively (deliveries:996,, births: 1008-4th 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 fourth quarter of 2002, the greatest number of deliveries (38%), occurred in the age group 25 to 29 years while there were no deliveries in the age group range of less than 15 years and 45+ years. The minimum age of the mothers was 15 years while the maximum age was 43 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

Age grp.(yrs)	4 th Quarter 2002	
	Frequency	%
<15	-	-
15-19	63	6
20-24	179	17
25-29	393	38
30-34	263	25
35-39	111	11
40-44	26	3
45+	-	-
Unspecified	2	-

For the fourth quarter of 2002, there were 16% (166) of all deliveries that occurred to mothers who were never married (single) while 83% (856) of deliveries occurred to mothers who were married once (married, widowed, separated). The remaining 1% (15) of delivery had no marital status specified. When comparing these figures to the same quarter, 2001 one can see that deliveries to women who were never married increased by 3% (2001-deliveries to women never married (13%), deliveries to women who were married once (86%).

In the fourth quarter 2002, according to the data registered in NOIS, of the 16% (166) mothers who have never been married, 99% (164) received 'Support at home to raise the infant' while <1% (1) did not have 'support at home'. In the remaining 1 this data was not specified.

94% (970) of all deliveries in the fourth quarter of 2002, occurred to women of Maltese nationality while 5% (52) were Non-Maltese. In the remaining 1% (15) the nationality was not specified.

There were 48% (495) of mothers who were primiparas while 52% (542) were multiparas in the fourth quarter of 2002. For the same period last year the primipara and multipara rate were the same at 48%(482) and 52% (514) respectively.

MISCARRIAGES IN PAST OBSTETRIC HISTORY

Of the total primiparas (495) in the fourth quarter 2002, 11% (56) recorded a past history of miscarriage while 89% (439) had no history of miscarriage registered.

With regards to total multipara (542), 23% (128) of deliveries reported a miscarriage in the past obstetric history (see table below).

No. of Miscarriages	4 th Quarter 2002		
	Primipara <i>No.-%</i>	Multipara <i>No.- %</i>	Total <i>No.-%</i>
0	439(89%)	414(76%)	853(82%)
1	54(11%)	94(17%)	148(14%)
2	1	28(5%)	29(3%)
=/>3	1	6(1%)	7(1%)
Unspecified	-	-	-
Total	495	542	1037

MATERNAL LIFESTYLES

There were 1% (13) of mothers who smoked either 1 to 3 cigarettes or more during pregnancy in the fourth quarter of last year. When comparing these figures to the same quarter of 2001, it can be seen that the smoking habits of mothers decreased by 8% in last year's quarter (9 % (85)-4th quart. '01). However, this data must be interpreted with caution as the data recorded may not reflect the real picture.

The table below gives the smoking, alcohol and drug habits of mothers for the fourth quarters of 2002 and 2001.

4 th Quarters	2002 No.	2001 No.
Cigarette smoking during pregnancy:		
➤ 1 to 3/day	2	20
➤ >than 3/day	11	65
➤ Do not smoke	1013	908
➤ Unspecified	11	3
Alcohol consumption during pregnancy:		
➤ Up to 1unit/day	-	-
➤ >than 1unit/day	-	-
➤ None	1026	994
➤ Unspecified	11	2
Drug Abuse during pregnancy		
➤ Yes	-	3
➤ No	1026	991
Unspecified	11	2

PATHOLOGY DURING PREGANANCY

The table below gives the number of mothers for the fourth quarters of 2002 and 2001, recorded with a specific obstetric pathology during pregnancy. There were 5%

of mothers who had gestational hypertension while for the same period in 2001 this rate was at 7%.

<i>Pathology recorded during pregnancy</i>	4 th Quarter 2002			4 th Quarter 2001		
	<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:	13	1024	-	14	982	-
Gestational hypertension:	55	981	1	70	926	-
Pre-eclampsia:	4	1031	2	12	984	-
Placenta praevia:	5	1030	2	10	986	-
Abruption of placenta:	5	1031	1	4	992	-
Assisted fertilisation (ART):	16	1016	5	5	991	-
Cardiovascular disease:	-	1037	-	4	992	-

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 fourth quarter of last year, there were 3 mothers that were registered as being Insulin Dependent Diabetic (IDDM) before this pregnancy while there was 1 mother recorded with Non-Insulin Dependent diabetes (NIDDM). In addition, there were a total of 14 mothers registered with gestational diabetes, all of which were treated without the use of insulin.

In addition there were 5 mothers that were recorded with 'Glycosuria' (ICD 10-O26.9) with no mention of IDDM/NIDDM before pregnancy or gestational diabetes during pregnancy.

ULTRASONOGRAPHY

According to NOIS for the fourth quarter of last year, there were 32% of mothers who had two ultrasounds carried out during pregnancy while 6% had more than five scans. The table below gives the number and rate of ultrasound scan carried out during pregnancy.

4 th Quarter 2002		
<i>No of Scans</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1	211	20
2	334	32
3	236	23
4	119	12
=/>5	67	6
Unspecified	70	7

CATEGORY OF MATERNITY ACCORDING TO DELIVERY

For the fourth quarter of 2002, there were a total of 1024 (99%) singleton and 1% (13) twin deliveries. When comparing these rates to the same period of 2001, one can see that the singleton and twin deliveries remain the same (see table below).

	4 th Quarters	
	2002	2001
Category	No.	No.
Singleton	1024	985
Twin	13	10
Triplet	-	1
Quadruplet	-	-

METHOD OF BIRTH

In the fourth quarter of 2002, there were 74% (774) of births that were delivered by vertex delivery, 22% (232) by emergency or elective Caesarean section and 4% (44) by assisted vaginal delivery (includes forceps, ventouse and breech).

When comparing the method of birth to the fourth quarter of 2001, it can be seen that the vertex deliveries increased by 5% while the Caesarean section births decreased by 5% in the 4th quarter 2002 (4th quarter 2001: vertex: 697(69%), C section:276(27%), assisted vaginal delivery: 35(4%).

	4 th Quarters	
	2002	2001
Method of Birth*	No.	No.
Infants delivered by vertex delivery	774	697
Infants delivered by elective CS before labour	109	131
Infants delivered by emergency CS before labour	15	22
Infants delivered by elective CS during labour	8	9
Infants delivered by emergency CS during labour	100	114
Infants delivered by forceps	6	7
Infants delivered by ventouse	36	28
Breech deliveries	2	-

*Note: *: Data analysed according to total birth*

BIRTHWEIGHTS AND GENDER OF BIRTHS

In the fourth quarter of 2002, there were 93% (981) of the total births (1050) that occurred in the birth weight range of 2500g to 4999g. While 6% (58) of the total births was in the low birth weight range of 1500g to 2499g. 1% (10) of births were of very low birth weight (500g to 1499g).

When comparing these birthweights to the same period in 2001, it can be seen that the birth weight ranges:2500 to 4999g, increased by 1%, in the fourth quarter of last year while the very low birthweights (500-1499g) remained the same (see table below).

Birthweight(g)	4 th quarter 2002	4 th quarter 2001
<500g	-	-
500-1499g	10	9
1500-2499g	58	69
2500-4999g	981	929
5000+	-	-
Unspecified	1	1
Average Birthweight	3225	3245

The male and female distribution of births in the fourth quarter of 2002 was 554 and 496 respectively (4th quart.-2001 Males-532, females 476).

OUTCOME OF BIRTH

The number of live births for the fourth quarters of 2002 and 2001 were 1043 and 1003 respectively which accounted for 99% of the total birth rate at a national level. The remaining 1 % accounted for the stillbirths (see table below).

Outcome of Birth	4 th quarter 2002	4 th quarter 2001
Babies alive after 28 days	1043	1003
Stillbirths	7	5
<i>Early Neonatal deaths in live births</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Late Neonatal deaths in live births</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>

BREAST FEEDING WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF DELIVERY

In the fourth quarter of 2002 there were 47% of infants that were breast fed 'within 30 minutes of birth' while 53% were not breast fed during the same time period. When comparing these figures to the fourth quarter of 2001, one can see that there was a 22% increase in the number of infants who were breast fed 'within 30 minutes of birth' in the fourth quarter 2002 (4th quart. 2001: 25% breast fed, 75% not breast fed).

Breast feeding within 30mins. of delivery	4 th quarter 2002	4 th quarter 2001
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Infants breast fed	493	254
Infants not breast fed	557	754
Unspecified	-	-

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	4 th quarter 2002	4 th quarter 2001
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Breast only	583	414
Bottle only	383	401
Mixed (Breast & Bottle)	72	179
Other	2	11
Unspecified	10	3