



NATIONAL OBSTETRIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (NOIS)

MALTA

First Quarterly Report: January to March 2003

Compiled by

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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 (1st quarter 2002). 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 925 deliveries registered in the Maltese islands for the first quarter of this year, which resulted in a total of 948, births.

When comparing these figures to the same period last year one can see that the number of deliveries and consequently the births **increased** by 15 and 24 respectively this quarter (*deliveries:910, births:924-1st quart. '02*).

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 (36%), occurred in the age group 25 to 29 years while the lowest number of deliveries (<1%) occurred in the age group less than 15 years while there were no deliveries in the age group of 45+ years. 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

Age grp.(yrs)	1 st quarter 2003		1 st quarter 2002	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<15	2	<1	3	<1
15-19	48	5	62	7
20-24	201	22	161	18
25-29	333	36	367	40
30-34	213	23	215	24
35-39	102	11	84	9
40-44	21	2	16	2
45+	-	-	-	-
Unspecified	5	0.5	2	-

When comparing the first quarters of this and last year, one can see that the rate of deliveries decreased by 2% in the age group 15 to 19 years and by 4% in the 25 to 29 age group, this quarter. On the other hand the rate of deliveries increased by 4% in the age group 20 to 24 years and by 2% in the 35 to 39 year age group, this quarter (see table).

For the first quarter of this year, there were 18% (166) of all deliveries that occurred to mothers who were never married (single) while 80% (741) of deliveries occurred to mothers who were married once (married, widowed, separated). The remaining 18 (2%) deliveries had no marital status specified (*1st quart. 2002, single 13%, married once 85%, unspec. 2%*). When comparing the first quarters 2003 and 2002, one can see that the rate of single mothers increased by 5% while the rate of mothers who were married once decreased by 5%, this quarter.

This quarter, of the total single mothers (166), 98% received support to raise their infant, 1% had no data on support registered and 1% received no support.

Of the total deliveries (925) this quarter, 93% (859) occurred to women of Maltese nationality while 5% (45) were Non-Maltese. The remaining 2% (21) deliveries were not specified (*1st quart. 2002- 96% were deliveries to Maltese nationality, 4% were Non-Maltese*).

There were 49% (454) of mothers who were primiparas while 51% (471) were multiparas in the first quarter of this year. For the same period last year the primipara and multipara rate were 53% and 47% respectively.

MATERNAL LIFESTYLES

There were 1% (14) 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 2002, it can be seen that the smoking habits of mothers decreased by 4% in this year's quarter (*5%-1st quart. '02*).

The table below gives the smoking, alcohol and drug habits of mothers for the first quarters of 2003 and 2002.

<i>1st Quarters</i>	2003	2002
	No.	No.
<i>Cigarette smoking during pregnancy:</i>		
➤ 1 to 3/day	3	9
➤ >than 3/day	11	40
➤ Do not smoke	897	844
➤ Unspecified	14	17
<i>Alcohol consumption during pregnancy:</i>		
➤ Up to 1unit/day	-	-
➤ >than 1unit/day	-	-
➤ None	911	897
➤ Unspecified	14	13
<i>Drug Abuse during pregnancy</i>		
➤ Yes	1	-
➤ No	910	897
Unspecified	14	13

PATHOLOGY DURING PREGANANCY

The table below gives the number of mothers for the first quarters of this year and 2002, recorded with a specific obstetric pathology during pregnancy. There were 6% of mothers who had gestational hypertention this quarter while for the same period last year this rate was at 4%.

<i>Pathology recorded during pregnancy</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2003</i>			<i>1st Quarter 2002</i>		
	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Unspec.</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Unspec.</i>
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Antepartum Haemorrhage:	916	8	1	7	903	-
Gestational hypertention:	866	57	2	37	873	-
Pre-eclampsia:	915	6	4	8	902	-
Placenta praevia:	916	7	2	3	907	-
Abruption of placenta:	917	4	4	-	910	-
Assisted fertilisation (ART):	910	12	3	5	905	-
Cardiovascular disease:	924	1	-	-	910	-

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 were 8 mother who were 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 and they were controlled without the use of insulin (*1st quart. 2002-one with Insulin Dependent Diabetic, one mother with Non-Insulin Dependent Diabetic, 14 mothers with gestational diabetes*).

ULTRASONOGRAPHY

According to NOIS for the first quarter of this year, there were 29% of mothers who had two ultrasounds carried out during pregnancy while 7% 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>1st Quarter 2003</i>		<i>1st Quarter 2002</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1	172	19	137	15
2	264	29	279	31
3	216	23	237	26
4	130	14	120	13
>5	65	7	78	9
Unspecified	78	8	59	6

CATEGORY OF MATERNITY ACCORDING TO DELIVERY

For the first quarter of this year, there were a total of 98% singleton deliveries, 2% 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 decreased by 1% while that for twin delivery increased by 1%, this quarter. The number of triplets remained the same in both quarters under review(see table below).

	<i>1st Quarters</i>	
	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>
<i>Category</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Singleton	903	897
Twin	21	12
Triplet	1	1
Quadruplet	-	-

METHOD OF BIRTH

In the first quarter of this year, there were 69% (653) of births that were delivered by vertex delivery, 28% (263) by emergency or elective Caesarean section and 3% (32) 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 rate of births by vertex deliveries decreased by 3% and the births by assisted vaginal delivery decreased by 1% while births by Caesarean section increased by 4% and, this quarter (see table below).

	1st Quarters	
	2003	2002
Method of Birth*	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Infants delivered by vertex delivery	653	665
Infants delivered by elective CS before labour	136	100
Infants delivered by emergency CS before labour	18	15
Infants delivered by elective CS during labour	4	4
Infants delivered by emergency CS during labour	105	104
Infants delivered by forceps	2	7
Infants delivered by ventouse	26	29
Breech deliveries	4	-

Note: *:Data analysed according to total birth

BIRTHWEIGHTS AND GENDER OF BIRTHS

In the first quarter of 2003, of the total births (948), there were 91% that occurred in the birth weight range of 2500g to 4999g. While 7% were in the low birth weight range of 1500g to 2499g. The remaining 2% of births were of very low birth weight (500g to 1499g) and the unspecified range (see table below).

Birthweight(g)	<i>1st quarter 2003</i>	<i>1st quarter 2002</i>
<500g	2	-
500-1499g	12	7
1500-2499g	65	52
2500-4999g	865	863
5000+	-	1
Unspecified	4	1
Average Birthweight	3192	3245

The male and female distribution of births in the first quarter of 2003 was 478 and 470 respectively (*1st quart. 2002, male 473, female 451*).

OUTCOME OF BIRTH

The number of live births for the first quarters of this year and last year were 941 and 921 respectively which accounted for 99% of the total birth rate at a national level (see table below).

Outcome of Birth	<i>1st quarter 2003</i>	<i>1st quarter 2002</i>
Babies born alive	941	921
Stillbirths	7	3
<i>Early Neonatal deaths</i>	8	5
<i>Late Neonatal deaths</i>	-	-

BREAST FEEDING WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF DELIVERY

In the first quarter of this year there were 47% of infants that were breast fed within 30 minutes of birth while 53% were not breast fed. When comparing these figures to

last years first quarter, one can see that there was an 27% increase in the rate of infants who were breast fed within 30 minutes of birth (see table below).

Breast feeding within 30mins. of delivery	<i>1st quarter 2003</i>	<i>1st quarter 2002</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Infants breast fed	447	186
Infants not breast fed	500	737
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>1st quarter 2003</i>	<i>1st quarter 2002</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Breast only	513	355
Bottle only	323	423
Mixed (Breast & Bottle)	93	126
Other	3	4
Unspecified	16	16