



NATIONAL OBSTETRIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (NOIS)

MALTA

Second Quarterly Report: April to June 2003

*COMPILED BY
DR. LINA JANULOVA M.D, MSc.
Focal Point, NOIS Project, Malta*

ANALYSIS

This report analyses, the **national deliveries and births** that occurred in the second quarter of this year and compares it to the same period of last year, where possible (published summary report 2nd quarter 2002).

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 933 deliveries registered in the Maltese islands for the second quarter of this year, which resulted in a total of 946 births.

When comparing these figures to the same period last year, it is interesting to note that the number of deliveries and births remained exactly the same (*deliveries: 933, births: 946-2nd 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 second quarter of this year, the greatest number of deliveries (38%), 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. There were no deliveries in the 45+ age group. The minimum age of the mothers was 14 years while the maximum age was 44 years. The most frequent age at delivery was 28 years.

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

Age grp.(yrs)	2 nd Quart. '03		2 nd Quart. '02	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<15	2	<1	1	<1
15-19	36	4	56	6
20-24	191	20	175	19
25-29	351	38	390	42
30-34	230	25	198	21
35-39	103	11	87	9
40-44	19	2	21	2
45+	-		1	<1
Unspecified	1	<1	4	<1

When comparing the second 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 age group 25 to 29 years, this quarter. Also in the age groups 30 to 34 and 35 to 39 years, there was an increase in the rate of deliveries by 4% and 2% respectively, this quarter.

For the second quarter of this year, there were 14% (133) of all deliveries that occurred to mothers who were never married (single) while 85% (789) of deliveries occurred to mothers who were married once (married, widowed, separated). The remaining 1% (11) of delivery had no marital status specified. When comparing these figures to the same quarter, 2002 one can see that deliveries to women who were never married decreased by 1%, this quarter (2nd 2002-deliveries to women never married (15%), deliveries to women who were married once (84%), unspecified 1%).

In the second quarter 2003, according to the data registered in NOIS, of the 14% (133) mothers who have never been married, 98% (130) received 'Support at home to raise the infant' while one mother did not have 'support at home'. In the remaining two mothers this data was not specified.

92% (863) of all deliveries this quarter, occurred to women of Maltese nationality while 6% (59) were Non-Maltese. In the remaining 1% (11) nationality was not specified.

There were 49% (458) of mothers who were primiparas while 51% (475) were multiparas in the second quarter of this year. For the same period last year the primipara and multipara rate were 51% and 49% respectively.

MATERNAL LIFESTYLES

There were 2% (20) of mothers who smoked either 1 to 3 cigarettes or more during pregnancy in the second 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 3% in this year's quarter (5% (47)-2nd quart. '02).

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

<i>2nd Quarters</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
<i>Cigarette smoking during pregnancy:</i>		
➤ 1 to 3/day	2	11
➤ >than 3/day	19	36
➤ Do not smoke	909	883
➤ Unspecified	3	3
<i>Alcohol consumption during pregnancy:</i>		
➤ Up to 1unit/day	-	2
➤ >than 1unit/day	-	-
➤ None	930	928
➤ Unspecified	3	3
<i>Drug Abuse during pregnancy</i>		
➤ Yes	5	3
➤ No	925	927
Unspecified	3	3

PATHOLOGY DURING PREGANANCY

The table below gives the number of mothers for the second quarters of this year and 2001, recorded with a specific obstetric pathology during pregnancy. There were 6% of mothers who had gestational hypertension this quarter while for the same period last year this rate was at 4%.

<i>Pathology recorded during pregnancy</i>	<i>2nd Quarter 2003</i>			<i>2nd Quarter 2002</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Unspec.</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Unspec.</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Antepartum Haemorrhage:	12	920	1	9	922	2
Gestational hypertension:	55	876	2	60	870	3
Pre-eclampsia:	3	925	5	7	922	4
Placenta praevia:	7	924	2	12	917	4
Abruption of plcenta:	2	926	5	2	925	6
Assisted fertilisation (ART):	7	922	4	5	924	4
Cardiovascular disease:	1	931	1	3	930	-

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 second quarter of this year, there was one mother who was registered as being Insulin Dependent Diabetic before this pregnancy while there were 2 mothers recorded with Non-Insulin Dependent diabetes. In addition, there were a total of 20 mothers registered with gestational diabetes, who were controlled without the use of insulin.

ULTRASONOGRAPHY

According to NOIS for the second quarter of this year, there were 32% of mothers who had two ultrasounds carried out during pregnancy while 5% 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>	2nd Quarter 2003		2nd Quarter 2002	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1	210	23	178	19
2	294	32	294	31
3	189	20	223	24
4	111	12	119	13
=/>5	49	5	63	7
None	1	<1	-	-
Unspecified	79	8	56	6

CATEGORY OF MATERNITY ACCORDING TO DELIVERY

For the second quarter of this year, there were a total of 920 (99%) singleton and 1% (13) twin deliveries. When comparing these figures to last year's quarter for the same period one can see that there were no triplet deliveries this quarter (see table below).

	2nd Quarters	
	2003	2002
<i>Category</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Singleton	920	921
Twin	13	11
Triplet	-	1
Quadruplet	-	-

METHOD OF BIRTH

In the second quarter of this year, there were 68.5% of births that were delivered by vertex delivery, 27.8% by emergency or elective Caesarean section and 3.7% by assisted vaginal delivery (includes forceps, ventouse and breech).

When comparing the method of birth to last year's second quarter, it can be seen that the vertex deliveries decreased by 0.8% while the Caesarean section births increased by 1.5% this year (2nd quarter 2002: vertex:69.3%, C section: 26.3%, assisted vaginal delivery: 4.3%).

	2 nd Quarters	
	2003	2002
Method of Birth*	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Infants delivered by vertex delivery	648	656
Infants delivered by emergency/elective Caesarean Section	263	249
Infants delivered by forceps	3	6
Infants delivered by ventouse	30	34
Breech deliveries	2	1

Note: *:Data analysed according to total birth

BIRTHWEIGHTS AND GENDER OF BIRTHS

In the second quarter of 2003, there were 94% of the total births (946) that occurred in the birth weight range of 2500g to 4999g. While 5% of the total births were in the low birth weight range of 1500g to 2499g. 1% of births were of very low birth weight (500g to 1499g). In addition there was 1 in the birth weight range of 5000 grams or more.

When comparing these birthweights to the same period last year, it can be seen that the birth weight range of 2500 to 4999g increased by 1%, this quarter. While the rate in the low birth weight range (LBW), the very low birthweights (VLBW) and more that 5000 g, remained almost the same, this quarter (see table below).

Birthweight(g)	2 nd quarter 2003	2 nd quarter 2002
<500g	1	-
500-1499g (VLBW)	11	11
1500-2499g (LBW)	47	51
2500-4999g	886	882
5000+	1	1
Unspecified	-	1
Average Birthweight	3206	3241

The male and female distribution of births in the second quarter of 2003 was 472 and 474 respectively (2nd quart.-2002 Males-504, females 442).

OUTCOME OF BIRTH

The number of live births for the second quarters of this year and last year were 939 and 941 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	2 nd quarter 2003	2 nd quarter 2002
Babies born alive	939	941
Stillbirths	7	5
Early Neonatal deaths	4	3
Late Neonatal deaths	-	3

BREAST FEEDING WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF DELIVERY

In the second quarter of this year there were 50% of infants that were breast fed 'within 30 minutes of birth' while 50% were not breast fed during the same time

period. When comparing these figures to last years second quarter, one can see that there was a 18% increase in the number of infants who were breast fed ‘within 30 minutes of birth’ in this years second quarter (2nd quart. 2002: 32% breast fed, 68% not breast fed)

Breast feeding within 30mins. of delivery	2 nd quarter 2003	2 nd quarter 2001
	No.	No.
Infants breast fed	473	303
Infants not breast fed	473	642
Unspecified	-	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	2 nd quarter 2003	2 nd quarter 2002
	No.	No.
Breast only	506	470
Bottle only	354	352
Mixed (Breast & Bottle)	65	103
Other	5	2
Unspecified	16	19