



NATIONAL OBSTETRIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (NOIS)

MALTA

First Quarterly Report: January to March 2004

Compiled by

*Dr. Miriam Gatt MD., MSc.
Focal Point-NOIS, Malta*

*Department of Health Information
95, G'Mangia Hill, G'Mangia, MSD 08
e-mail: miriam.gatt@gov.mt
Tel. No: 21237067, 21242454*

ANALYSIS

This report analyses the **national deliveries and births** that occurred on the Maltese islands in the first three months of this year and compares it to the same period of last year (1st quarter 2003).

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

There were a total of 951 deliveries registered in the Maltese islands for the first quarter of this year, which resulted in a total of 967 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 26 and 19 respectively this quarter (*deliveries: 925, births: 948 - 1st quart.2003*).

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 (37%), occurred in the age group 25 to 29 years while the lowest number of deliveries (<1%) occurred in the less than 15 year age group and the 45+ year age group. The minimum age of the mothers was 14 years while the maximum age was 45 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)	1 st quarter 2004		1 st quarter 2003	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<15	2	<1	2	<1
15-19	48	5	48	5
20-24	183	19	201	22
25-29	348	37	333	36
30-34	251	26	213	23
35-39	96	10	102	11
40-44	19	2	21	2
45+	2	<1	-	
Unspecified	2	<1	5	0.5

When comparing the first quarters of this and last year, one can see that the rate of deliveries increased by 1% in the age group 25 to 29 years; by 3% in the 30 to 34 year age group and by 1% in the 35 to 39 year age group. On the other hand the rate of deliveries decreased by 3% in the age group 20 to 24 years (see table).

For the first quarter of this year, 18% (176) of all deliveries were to mothers who were never married (single) while 81% (766) of deliveries occurred to mothers who were married once (married, widowed, separated). The remaining 1% (9) deliveries had no marital status specified (*1st quart. 2003, single 18%, married once 80%, unspec. 2%*). When comparing the first quarters 2004 and 2003, one can see that the rate of single mothers and mothers who were married once have remained similar.

This quarter, of the total single mothers, 99% (175) were reported as having support to raise their infant while 1% (1) were reported not to have support.

Of the total deliveries (951) this quarter, 93% (880) occurred to women of Maltese nationality while 5% (43) were Non-Maltese. The remaining 3% (28) were not specified (*1st quart. 2003 - 93% were deliveries to mothers of Maltese nationality, 5% were Non-Maltese*).

In the first quarter of this year, there were 46% (442) of mothers who were primagravidas while 54% (509) were multigravidas. For the same period last year the primagravida and multigravida rate were 49% and 51% respectively.

MATERNAL LIFESTYLES

There were 6% (60) of mothers reported to have smoked 1 more cigarettes per day during pregnancy. When comparing these figures to the same quarter of 2003, it can be seen that the smoking habits of mothers increased by 5% in this year's quarter (*1st quart. 2003*).

The table below gives the smoking, alcohol and drug habits of mothers for the first quarters of 2004 and 2003.

<i>Ist Quarters</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2003</i>
	No.	No.
<i>Cigarette smoking during pregnancy:</i>		
➤ 1 to 3/day	12	3
➤ >than 3/day	48	11
➤ Do not smoke	887	897
➤ Unspecified	4	14
<i>Alcohol consumption during pregnancy:</i>		
➤ Up to 1unit/day	-	-
➤ >than 1unit/day	-	-
➤ None	947	911
➤ Unspecified	4	14
<i>Drug Abuse during pregnancy</i>		
➤ Yes	-	1
➤ No	947	910
➤ Unspecified	4	14

PATHOLOGY DURING PREGANANCY

The table below gives the number of mothers recorded with a specific obstetric pathology during pregnancy for the first quarters of this year and 2003. There were 6% of mothers who had gestational hypertension this quarter which is similar to the same period last year.

<i>Pathology recorded during pregnancy</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2004</i>			<i>1st Quarter 2003</i>		
	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Unspec.</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Unspec.</i>
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Antepartum haemorrhage	947	4	-	916	8	1
Gestational hypertension	892	59	-	866	57	2
Pre-eclampsia	947	4	-	915	6	4
Placenta praevia	947	4	-	916	7	2
Abruption of placenta	945	6	-	917	4	4
Assisted fertilisation (ART)	942	9	-	910	12	3
Cardiovascular disease	951	-	-	924	1	-

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 3 mothers who were registered as being Insulin Dependent Diabetic before this pregnancy and there was 1 mother recorded with Non-Insulin Dependent diabetes. In addition, there were a total of 12 mothers registered with gestational diabetes and they were controlled without the use of insulin (*1st quart. 2003 - 8 Insulin Dependent Diabetic mothers, 1 Non-Insulin Dependent Diabetic mother and 14 mothers with gestational diabetes*).

ULTRASONOGRAPHY

According to NOIS for the first quarter of this year, there were 27% 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 scans carried out during pregnancy.

<i>No of Scans</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2004</i>		<i>1st Quarter 2003</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
0	4	<1	-	-
1	220	23	172	19
2	259	27	264	29
3	213	23	216	23
4	106	11	130	14
5 or more	69	7	65	7
Unspecified	80	8	78	8

CATEGORY OF MATERNITY ACCORDING TO DELIVERY

For the first quarter of this year, there were a total of 99% singleton deliveries, 1% twin deliveries and 2 sets 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 decreased by 1% (*1st quart. 2003: 98% singleton deliveries, 2% twin deliveries*).

	<i>1st Quarters</i>	
	<i>2004</i>	<i>2003</i>
<i>Category</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Singleton	937	903
Twin	12	21
Triplet	2	1
Quadruplet	-	-

METHOD OF BIRTH

In the first quarter of this year 967 infants were delivered, of these 70% (676) were delivered by vertex delivery, 26% (256) by emergency or elective Caesarean section and 4% (35) by assisted vaginal delivery (includes forceps, ventouse and breech).

When comparing the method of birth to last year's first quarter, it is seen that the rate of births by vertex deliveries increased by 1% and the births by assisted vaginal delivery decreased by 2% while births by Caesarean section increased by 1% for this quarter (see table below).

	1st Quarters	
	2004	2003
Method of Birth*	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Infants delivered by vertex delivery	676	653
Infants delivered by elective CS before labour	132	136
Infants delivered by emergency CS before labour	10	18
Infants delivered by elective CS during labour	3	4
Infants delivered by emergency CS during labour	111	105
Infants delivered by forceps	2	2
Infants delivered by ventouse	33	26
Breech deliveries	-	4

Note: *:Data analysed according to total birth

BIRTHWEIGHTS AND GENDER OF BIRTHS

In the first quarter of 2004, of the total births (967), there were 91% (877) that occurred in the birth weight range of 2500g to 4999g. While 8% (79) were in the low birth weight range of 1500g to 2499g. The remaining 1% of births were of very low birth weight (500g to 1499g) (see table below).

Birthweight(g)	<i>1st quarter 2004</i>	<i>1st quarter 2003</i>
<500g	-	2
500-1499g	11	12
1500-2499g	79	65
2500-4999g	877	865
5000+	-	-
Unspecified	-	4
Average Birthweight	3204	3192

The male and female distribution of births in the first quarter of 2004 was 505 and 462 respectively (*1st quart. 2003, male: 478, female: 470*).

OUTCOME OF BIRTH

The number of live births for the first quarters of this year and last year were 966 and 941 respectively. The number of stillbirths and early neonatal deaths were lower for this quarter when compared to the same quarter last year (see table below).

Outcome of Birth	<i>1st quarter 2004</i>	<i>1st quarter 2003</i>
Babies born alive	966	941
Stillbirths	1	7
<i>Early Neonatal deaths</i>	4	8
<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. These figures are similar to those of last years' first quarter (see table below).

Breast feeding within 30mins. of delivery	<i>1st quarter 2004</i>	<i>1st quarter 2003</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Infants breast fed	453	447
Infants not breast fed	514	500
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	<i>1st quarter 2004</i>	<i>1st quarter 2003</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Breast only	528	513
Bottle only	304	323
Mixed (Breast & Bottle)	122	93
Other	6	3
Unspecified	7	16