

The Safe Baby Bundle to reduce stillbirth and other adverse outcomes

February 2019

1. Introduction

The stillbirth rate in Australia is approximately 35% higher than the top performing countries globally. In up to 50% of stillbirths, deficiencies in care are identified and in around 20 – 30% the death is avoidable due to these factors. In partnership with health departments across Australia, a bundle of care to address the priority evidence practice gaps in stillbirth prevention will be developed and implemented. Similar care bundles in the England and Scotland have shown a 20% reduction in stillbirth rates.

2. The goal

To reduce stillbirth rates after 28 weeks' gestation by 20%. Secondary outcome measures include uptake of bundle elements, adverse neonatal outcomes, health service utilisation, women's care experiences, clinician knowledge and confidence, cost.

3. The Bundle of Care

The Bundle has five elements addressing commonly identified evidence practice gaps as follows:

1. awareness and improving care of women with decreased fetal movements (DFM);
2. pregnancy risk assessment and ongoing monitoring for fetal growth restriction (FGR);
3. supporting women to stop smoking;
4. providing advice for pregnant women on maternal sleep position; and
5. supporting shared decision-making around timing of birth for women with risk factors for stillbirth.

Each element of the bundle will include resources for women and their care providers to promote best practice care including educational packages, audit tools, written materials and a mobile phone app. The Bundle will be implemented and evaluated across maternity services in Australia and supplemented by a public awareness program.

4. Project plan

The bundle elements build upon existing work of the Stillbirth CRE in partnership with Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand integrating and developing clinician education programs based on best practice guidelines and information for women. We have drawn heavily on the experience in the UK with implementation of similar bundles of care. Working with the Health Departments in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland and in partnership with the Stillbirth Foundation Australia and Still Aware we aim to implement the bundle of care commencing 2019-2022 followed by an evaluation and refinement of the bundle and its resources as part of the second phase of the Safe Baby Bundle. It is hoped that the SBB will become a nationally supported program to reduce stillbirth rates in Australia.

The NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth (Stillbirth CRE) is a national partnership made up of parents, parent advocates, health care professionals, researchers, professional colleges, and policy makers, to address the neglected tragedy of stillbirth in Australia. The Stillbirth CRE is coordinated through the Mater Research Institute-University of Queensland.

For more detail please visit our website: www.stillbirthcre.org.au