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Wide differences in mode of delivery within Europe: risk-stratified analyses of aggregated routine data from the Euro-Peristat study: concerns about caesarean section are justified

The purpose of our paper¹ was to draw attention to the wide variations in practice and the ways in which they are correlated. We did not attempt to address the safety and consequences of caesarean section. It is, however, increasingly clear that caesarean section, especially repeat caesarean section, carries serious risks for the mother, such as uterine rupture and abnormal invasive placentation responsible for life-threatening haemorrhage, and can also have short- and long-term effects for babies, including altered bacterial gut colonisation and increased risk of immune-mediated disorders.^{2,3} We therefore think it is important that caesarean section should only be performed when it is clinically necessary to deal with serious problems for the mother or the baby. By drawing attention to the variations in practice, we highlighted the need for further research and informed debate on the subject. ■

References

- 1 Macfarlane AJ, Blondel B, Mohangoo AD, Cuttini M, Nijhuis J, Novak Z, et al. Wide

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- 2 National Institute of Clinical Excellence. *Caesarean Section. NICE Guideline CG 132*. London: National Institute for Clinical Excellence, 2011. www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg132 (accessed 10 April 2016).

- 3 World Health Organization. *WHO Statement on Caesarean Section Rates*. Geneva: WHO, 2015 (WHO/RHR/15-02).

Appendix 1

The Euro-Peristat Scientific Committee: Gerald Haidinger (Austria), Sophie Alexander (Belgium), Pavlos Pavlou (Cyprus), Petr Velebil (Czech Republic), Anne-Marie Nybo Andersen (Denmark), Luule Sakkeus (Estonia), Mika Gissler (Finland), Béatrice Blondel (France), Nicholas Lack (Germany), Aris Antsaklis (Greece), István Berbik (Hungary), Helga Sól Ólafsdóttir (Iceland), Sheelagh Bonham (Ireland), Marina Cuttini (Italy), Janis Misins (Latvia), Jone Jaselioniene (Lithuania), Yolande Wagener (Luxembourg), Miriam Gatt (Malta), Jan Nijhuis (Netherlands), Kari Klungsoyr (Norway), Katarzyna Szamotulska (Poland), Henrique Barros (Portugal), Mihai Horga (Romania), Jan Cap (Slovakia), Živa Novak-Antolic (Slovenia), Francisco Bolívar (Spain), Karin Gottvall (Sweden), Sylvie Berrut (Switzerland), Alison Macfarlane (Uni-

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The Euro-Peristat Scientific Committee members are in Appendix 1.

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