WANTe study:
Women’s experiences of in-utero transfer in NSW: A qualitative study

Pregnancy and newborn Service Network PSN
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Some statistics

- 100,000 births in NSW per annum
- 7.5% give birth before 37 weeks
- Threatened Preterm Labour (TPL) is the most common reason for inutero transfer & less likely to birth after transfer
Maternal and Perinatal health context in NSW

- 15 LHDs
- 70+ public maternity services
- Range in service capability across LHDs
- Range of maternity facilities within LHDs
- Complexity in terms of size, geography and services provided
Maternal and Perinatal health context in NSW

**Tiered Maternity Network**

- Designed to support capability, patient flow and capacity
- When TMN unable to support coordination of maternal transfers via Perinatal Advice Line (PAL)
Considerations for TRANSFER

• Improved outcomes for in utero transfer compared with ex utero transfer

• Aim is to transfer and birth women as close as possible to their home taking into account gestation

• In reality, for many rural women this transfer may need to be into Sydney, Newcastle or Canberra for level 6 care
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAL Calls</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Did not give birth</th>
<th>Gave birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Calls</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>47 (7 twins)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened Premature Labour</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preterm Labour</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPROM</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>APH</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-eclampsia</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fetal Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abnormal placentation</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
A story

- Woman with some mild contractions late at night
- Presents at her local L2 hospital
- TMN unable to support (no NICU beds)
- PAL arrange RPA to accept
- Transfer to Sydney
Narrandera – RPA
1h 20m by Fixed Wing Air ambulance
Purpose:

To gain an in-depth understanding of women’s perceptions and experiences of in-utero transfer (IUT) for threatened pre-term labour to a tertiary level hospital in NSW: With a view to influence clinical decision-making, and current provision of perinatal referral and transport services.
Literature review

• Limited literature on antenatal women’s experiences of inutero transfer
• Postnatal research / NICU experiences
• The more remote more likelihood of inutero transfer with a lower probability of giving birth
• Less than half urgent inutero transfer gave birth
• TPL and APH was the most common indication inutero transfer
• Maternal anxiety/stress/trauma impact on fetus and child.
Methods:

- Descriptive, exploratory qualitative
- Open-ended, semi-structured interviews with women (face to face & phone) 30-60 min
- Audio-taped and transcribed verbatim
- Analysed until saturation of themes.
Sample

- Cross-section of women from Sydney metro, regional and remote areas.
- Approx 10-30 women in sample
- Inclusion criteria:
  1. Pregnant women who have had a hospital-to-hospital transfer for threatened preterm labour that did NOT result in a birth within the past 2 weeks
  2. 18 years or older.
Issues explored in the research

• How women felt presenting to their local hospital before they were transferred
• How was the process of transfer
• Experiences of being away from home
• Their reception at the receiving hospital and what information they wanted/needed to know
Results so far (as on 20/3)

To date 10 women have been interviewed

- 6 women from Metropolitan areas
- 3 Rural locations
- Nil Remote transfers
- One woman was moved from Level 6-to-6 unit
  - 5 first time mothers
  - 5 Multiparous woman
Preliminary themes – just in case

- I sort of thought I would be going um expecting that I’d just be told that it’s braxton hicks and that I’d be sent home

- probably have to fly me out to John Hunter just to be on the cautious side

- she just said ‘we have to transfer you to Liverpool because you are under 34 weeks and we don’t deliver under 34 weeks just in case you are going to deliver, and we need to get you over there as soon as possible’

- ‘my job is to get you over there as soon as possible’

- it would’ve probably better to stay there and see what happened first and monitored me to make sure that the test was actually a 100% accurate before even just…you know…wasting my time
Preliminary theme - Loneliness and Isolation

• I presumed John Hunter Hospital (2hrs from home) …. and I was okay with that … when they turned around and said that they were no beds available and I will be going to Sydney…that was a bit different…. it upset me

• you are crying now…. cause I am in here… I feel like ummm…anywhere at home…like Port and then I think about it like that it’s almost a 5 hour drive…that anyone would come to see me…umm…<weeping>

• but all the other ladies in here, all sort of come here and then they have contractions and then they have moved on…

• I was on my own as a patient…yeah…it was very different…hmmm…got so claustrophobic in there coz I was in the bed…
information about what will happen if there was like an emergency c-section? Or um may be talk to like a paediatrician or something because they sort of take over care

It’s like a waiting game. Its not really solid [information] what’s going to happen

…they didn’t go into the risk factors of like the baby being born early .. like they just explained like the steroids I had to help mature the lungs and like help him breath when, if he was to arrive
Preliminary themes - Supports

• so I have come down with no money….. that’s the thought…even if I wanted to leave I can’t…laughed

• it’s really helped that a lot of the um midwives and nurses and things have been really understanding and will take the time to explain things to me if I’m feeling anxious like I’m overreacting they would explain that I wouldn’t be here unless

• Oh the [road] ambulance people were amazing…. I still remember their names… …. They were clowns, they were so funny…. Yeah [name] was amazing, reassuring … they did have one of the nurses [midwives] come with me from the Bankstown hospital. She was amazing too…. Uummmm…. It was a good journey. No problems.
In closing


