



Childbirth Survey Analysis

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Introduction

During November 2012 I decided to carry out a survey on childbirth. This was intended purely for my own curiosity, as being an auditor, I trust no-one and need proof of anything I am told!

Throughout my pregnancy and hypnobirthing courses, I had read and been quoted various statistics and statements about inductions, length of labour, breech babies etc. etc. All of which seemed to come from outdated research, or from that carried out in other countries. So, I decided to put all the claims I had heard to the test, and carry out my own survey using real people, in real time and in my own country. Using various social media groups, I put my survey out there for all to complete.

I was pleasantly surprised to have received 141 completed surveys within a month of making the survey live. So I eagerly set about analysing the results, the findings of which are here for you to see below. (Although, please note, this is a summary of the key findings. I did not appreciate just how much data I had collected and many more statistics can come from this data. If you have any questions regarding childbirth statistics, please ask and I'll see if I have the information already collected to answer any queries).

The results proved interesting, and I am pleased to say, confirm all that I had learnt. But now, I can confidently teach and preach to others with my own evidence to back up my claims!

I would like to thank all those that supported me with my research by completing my survey.

Cheryl

x

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Key Findings

■ *Induction during pregnancy leads to emergency C-section.*

A membrane sweep is very often the start of a chain of other interventions and inductions such as oxytocin gel, membrane rupture, synthetic oxytocin drip etc. The end result of which is highly likely to end with an emergency/unplanned caesarean birth.

■ *Fear causes more pain during childbirth.*

Fear creates tension in the muscles, which creates more pain. During labour, the muscles need to be relaxed to be effective and less painful. Fear can also delay the start of labour, probably due to a subconscious effect of the mother holding back from birthing.

Delayed labour leads to induced labour, which brings on a more painful labour due to the body being 'forced' to birth before the body and its muscles are truly prepared to birth.

■ *Hypnobirthing works*

Hypnobirthing releases any fears the mother may have during pregnancy, and enables the mother to be more confident in her body's ability to birth. It teaches the mother how to remain calm and relaxed during pregnancy and labour, therefore reducing the pain of childbirth.

Hypnobirthing is successful for 90% of users, and so means that induction is less likely to be required to bring on childbirth.

■ *Estimated due dates are early*

60% of babies were born after EDD....say no more.

■ *Pregnancy term of over 42 weeks increases likelihood of a C-section.*

It is often the belief that the baby will grow too big to be birthed naturally after 42 weeks, although these statistics show that only 13% of babies were born bigger than 9lbs after 42 weeks of pregnancy.

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- *There were twice as many home births than those at midwife led units/birthing centres.*

This could be due to an increasing confidence in home births, but is more likely to be due to the unavailability of a birthing centre due to recent closures of some units and only 'low risk' mothers being accepted.

- *There is less than 1% chance that a baby will be breech at the time of birth*

Maybe there should be less panic of this being a problem as babies can turn right at the last moment.

- *Bigger babies, longer pregnancy, longer labour*

Common sense really - the body will need more time to adjust to enable a bigger baby to be fully developed and birthed. Therefore, these babies may not conform to the NHS expected length of pregnancy/labour.

- *First time mums are more likely to have a longer labour.*

Due to the body not having birthed before, it is using muscles that have not been used before. Second time mums therefore have a quicker labour, as muscles are already established in the role of birthing.

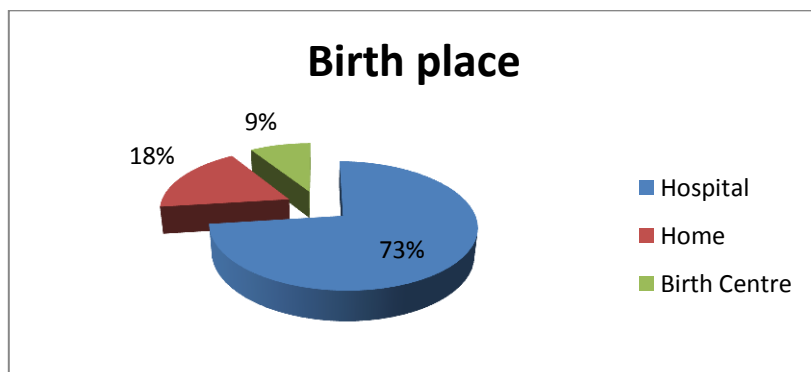


Survey - Analysis

General

The survey has proved to be reflective of recent births with the majority (73%) of birth surveys being for those babies born within the last 5 years.

52% of births were female, so showing an on-going even split between births of **boys and girls**.



73% of all births took place in a hospital, 18% at home and the remaining 9% at a midwife led unit/birthing centre.



Baby weights were:

- 18% under 7lbs
- 69% between 7 and 9lbs
- 13% over 9lbs

54% of mums stated that labour began in the evening/early hours.



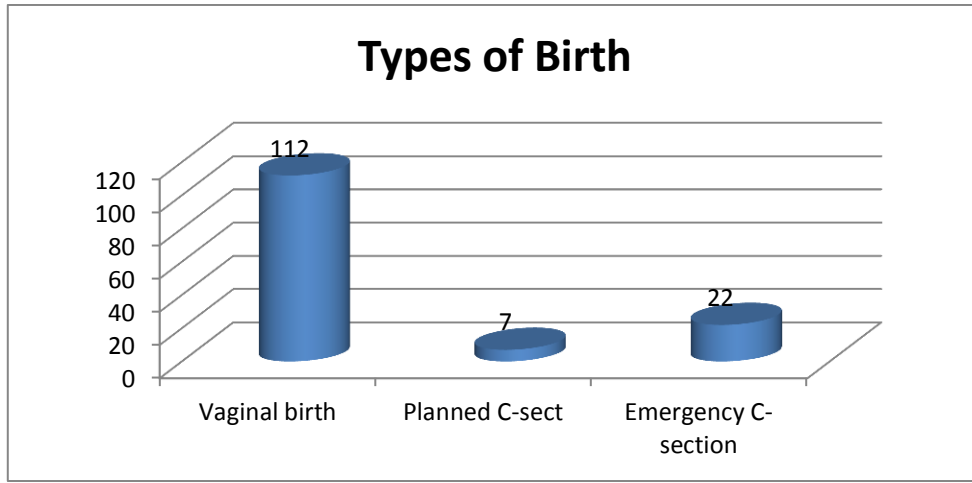
The majority (over one third) of births were in the early hours of the morning – between midnight and 7am.

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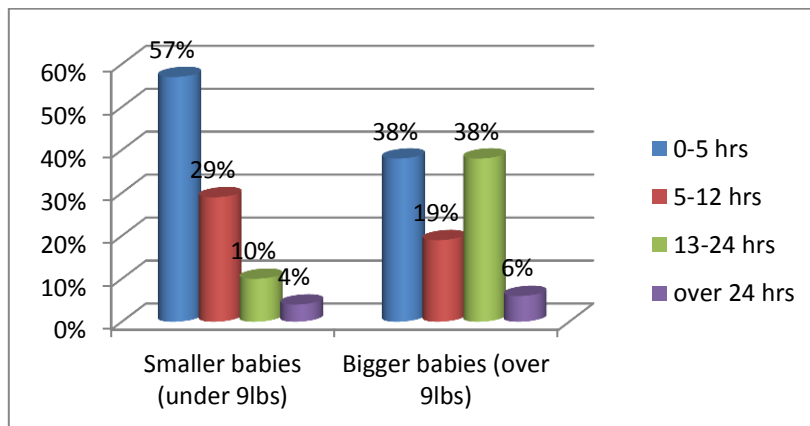
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Of the 141 births:

- 86 (61%) of vaginal births were 'normal', the other 26 (18%) were assisted vaginal births i.e. forceps or ventouse
- 29 (21%) were caesarean sections, including 16% 'emergency'
- 13 of these births were back to back, 8 of which were assisted vaginal births
- 1 other birth was breech (by emergency C-section)
- 18 of 141 (13%) babies born weighed over 9lbs.

Bigger baby, longer labour



42% of bigger babies had an established labour length over 13 hours, compared to 14% of smaller babies.



60% of all births were after their expected due date.

Of 18 bigger babies born, 78% were after their expected due date.

Of those pregnancy terms over 42 weeks, 13% birthed a baby over 9lbs.

67% of pregnancies over 42 weeks ended in emergency C-section.

Fear causes pain

89% of mums that were worried about giving birth used pain relief drugs during labour.
60% of mums that were not worried about giving birth used pain relief drugs during labour.

First time mums

61% of respondents were first time mums, providing some useful observations regarding pregnancy lengths and labour periods.



69% of first time mums gave birth after 40 weeks of pregnancy.

48% of multi-mums (more than one child) gave birth after 40 weeks of pregnancy.

Established labour lengths:

- 0-12 hours for 70% of first time mums
- 0-5 hours for 74% of multi-mums.



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Inductions

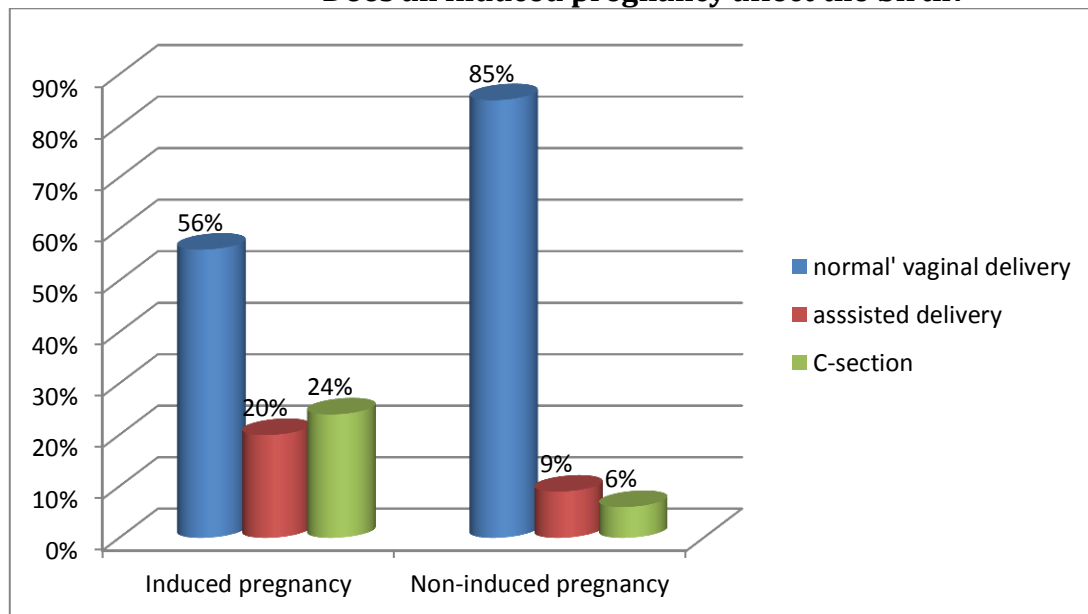
47 of 141 mums stated they were worried about giving birth, 62% of which went on to have some kind of induction.

94 mums were not worried about birth, 52% went on to have some kind of induction.



82% of emergency caesareans were after some form of intervention.

Does an induced pregnancy affect the birth?



44% of induced pregnancies ended with some form of 'complication', compared to 15% of those pregnancies that were not induced.

Half of emergency caesarean sections were after a full labour (from 1st contraction) of over 24 hours.

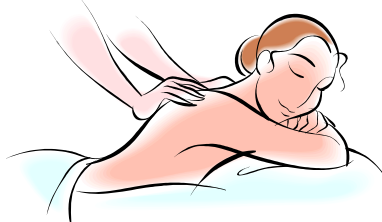
83% of mums that were induced required pain relief drugs during labour compared to 58% of mums that laboured naturally.



60% of mums that had a sweep during pregnancy went on to have further inductions.

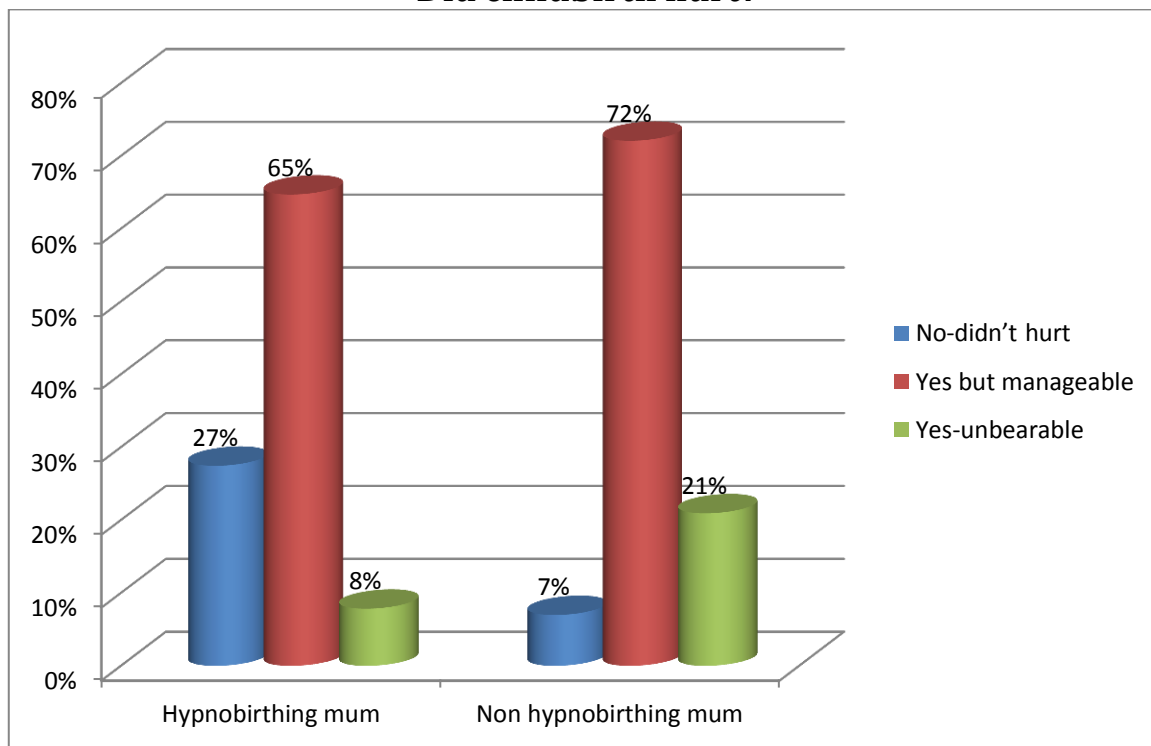
Hypnobirthing

37% of mums completing this survey used hypnobirthing during their pregnancy and birth, with a 90% success rate.



13% of hypnobirthing mums did not enjoy their labour, compared to 53% of non-hypnobirthing mums.

Did childbirth hurt?



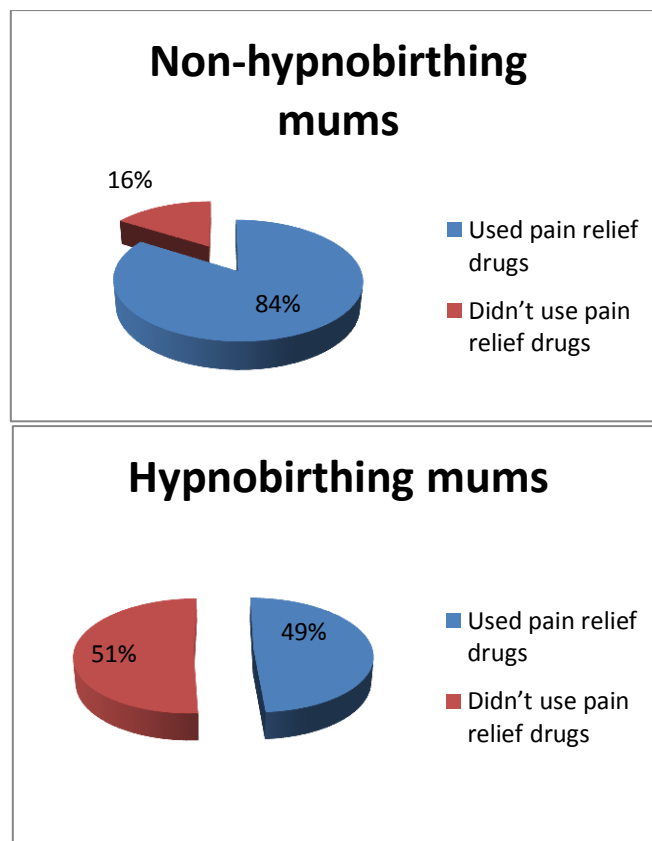
21% (18/86) of non-hypnobirthing mums stated that their childbirth experience was unbearably painful, compared to 8% (4/51) of hypnobirthing mums.

7% of non-hypnobirthing mums stated that their childbirth experience didn't hurt compared to 27% of hypnobirthing mums.



96% of hypnobirthing mums would use hypnobirthing again.

44% of those mums that didn't use hypnobirthing stated that this was because they didn't know much about it and/or didn't believe in it.



16% of non-hypnobirthing mums didn't use pain relief drugs during birth compared to 51% of hypnobirthing mums.

Over half (51%) of non-hypnobirthing mums required some method of induction compared to 41% of non-hypnobirthing mums.

