

PRESS RELEASE

17 July 2014



Perinatal Institute wins Patient Safety Award for reducing stillbirth rates in England

The Perinatal Institute won a prestigious national Patient Safety & Care Award for the second consecutive year. The prize was awarded at Tuesday's ceremony at the Grosvenor House in London, attended by over 1100 clinicians and senior health care managers. The Awards, jointly hosted by the Health Service Journal and the Nursing Times, are the foremost annual celebration of achievement in improving patient safety in the NHS, and have received record number of submissions this year.

The prize was awarded for the Institute's work on improving patient safety in maternity care, based on its ground breaking **education and training initiative** which has led to a reduction in stillbirths to their lowest ever levels in England. The programme, called **GAP (Growth Assessment Protocol)** has since been implemented in the majority of Trusts in the United Kingdom, and is now recommended by NHS England and the Scottish Government. GAP focuses on stillbirth prevention by improved recognition of pregnancies at risk: by being able to better identify the babies which are not growing well, further investigations can be undertaken to determine the best time for delivery, before babies come to harm because of poor nutrition in the womb.

This year's prize follows the 2013 Patient Safety Award for clinical leadership, awarded to the Perinatal Institute for demonstrating in the West Midlands that many stillbirths are associated with fetal growth restriction and are hence preventable.

Sally Giddings, supervisor of midwives and head of midwifery at the Perinatal Institute, said: *'This award is a welcome recognition of the hard work by our team and by clinicians in many Trusts who often have to overcome ingrained but out-of-date attitudes. Most stillbirths were until recently considered unavoidable, but include many that can be prevented by better education and training'*.

Professor Jason Gardosi, director of the Perinatal Institute, said: *'Each stillbirth is a tragedy, but attitudes to prevention are changing. Our finding that many of these deaths are avoidable have spurred clinicians on to adopt a simple, evidence based programme of education and training which has the potential of saving over 1000 babies a year across the UK. We hope that this Award will help convince the remaining maternity units to follow national guidance and come on board this year'*.

Background

The Perinatal Institute (PI) is a national not-for-profit organisation set up to enhance the safety and quality of maternity care. Prior to the last NHS re-organisation, its staff ran the West Midlands Perinatal Institute which was funded by Primary Care Trusts and the Strategic Health Authority. PI is a qualified provider of maternity support services, including education and training in standardised maternity records, fetal growth assessment and perinatal audit.

The Growth Assessment Protocol (GAP) programme of education and training and its underlying rationale are detailed here: <http://www.perinatal.org.uk/FetalGrowth/GAP/GAP.aspx> .

The national uptake of GAP by Trusts and health Boards has been put on line at the request of many expecting parents, and is available here: <http://www.perinatal.org.uk/gap-uptake.aspx>

The estimate of 1000 stillbirths potentially prevented across the UK is detailed here: <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/3/12/e003942.full>

NHS England – *High quality care for all, now and for future generations*
(supporting commissioning guidance on management of fetal growth restriction):
<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/sop/red-prem-mort/mnp/#eight-two>

Further information:

Perinatal Institute - www.perinatal.org.uk

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The Patient Safety & Care Awards are organised by EMAP on behalf of the HSJ and Nursing Times.

- [Winners Brochure](#)

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- Health Service Journal: <http://www.hsj.co.uk> Nursing Times: <http://www.nursingtimes.net>

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