

Birth interventions differ for urban and rural women

Researchers recently compared birth interventions provided to women giving birth to their first child based on where they lived.

The study found that women who lived in rural areas had fewer birth interventions than those in the city. Women living in rural areas were less likely to have:

- Epidural or spinal block (43% versus 56%)
- Elective caesarean sections (8% versus 11%)
- Emergency caesarean sections (16% versus 18%).

Researchers believe these differences may be due to a lack of choice in maternity services in some rural locations; however, it could also be argued that women living in areas where epidurals are not the 'norm' for pain relief in labour are less likely to request or expect such an option. Equally, women are more likely to request/expect an epidural if they live in an area where the perception of labour care includes an epidural.

It is important that women are aware of all the options available to them, and they have the support of their midwife and/or other health care professionals to carry out their preferred labour care options.