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Introduction

Induction of labour (IOL) can improve or worsen obstetric outcomes and should only be used when indicated. The prevalence of IOLs are increasing in metropolitan and rural hospitals. Unnecessary IOLs can result in birth trauma, urgent instrumental delivery, or emergency caesarean sections. QLD clinical guidelines inform best practice and assist practitioners to identify appropriate indications for IOLs.

Aim

Comparing the indications, management, and outcomes of IOLs across five rural hospitals to the QLD Clinical Guidelines.¹

Method

Retrospective chart reviews of the first two IOLs for each month of 2021 at Hospitals A-E were collected. Labour augmentation, stillbirths and terminations were excluded. Medical and pregnancy history, IOL methods, and delivery outcomes were collected and analysed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Overall, 105 charts were audited, representing 9% of all IOLs across the five hospitals.

Cervical Ripening Methods

Methods varied site to site. Hospital A used dinoprostone gel in 83% of IOLs & balloon catheters in only 8% of IOLs.

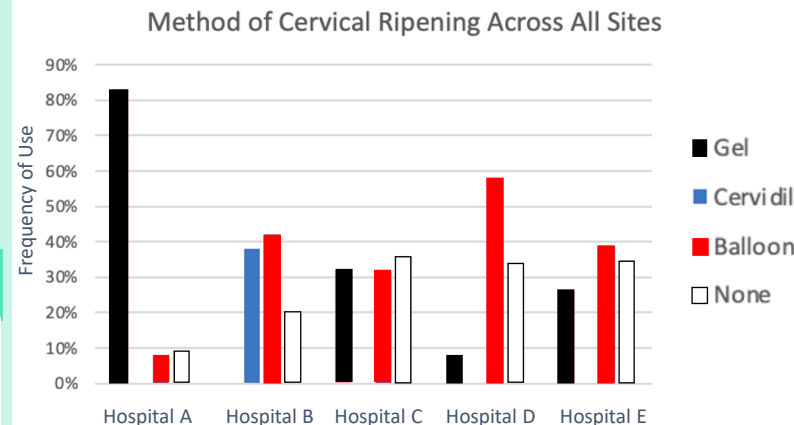
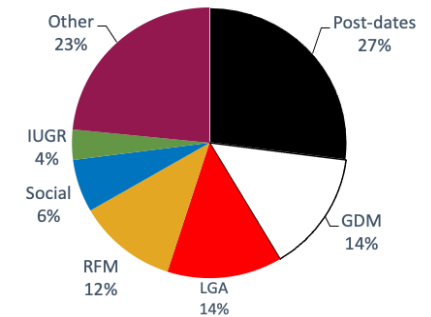


Fig. 1. Proportion of cervical ripening methods across sites

Most Common Indications:

1. Post-dates, however, 38% were < K40+6
2. Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) alone

Fig. 2. Proportion of IOL indications across all sites



Discussion

Our audit results suggest that adherence to best practice is lower in rural hospitals. We found that well-controlled GDM alone and "post-dates" induced before K40+6 were listed as indications for IOL, which is not supported by the guidelines. The high use of dinoprostone gel at Hospital A, while acceptable under the guidelines, was atypical compared to Hospitals B-E and not in line with current literature recommendations. Identifying this significant difference in practice prompted appropriate training and implementation of balloon catheter usage at Hospital A, thus optimising women-centred obstetric care.

¹ Queensland Clinical Guidelines. (2022). *Induction of Labour*. Queensland Health. https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/641423/g-iol.pdf