



NATIONAL OBSTETRIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (NOIS)

MALTA

First Quarterly Report: January to March 2014

*Directorate for Health Information and Research (DHIR)
National Obstetric Information System (NOIS), Malta*

https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/chief_medical_officer/healthinfor_research/registries/births.aspx

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NATIONAL OBSTETRIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (NOIS)

A national obstetric information system was launched at the Directorate for Health Information and Research (DHIR) at the beginning of 1999 and now covers practically all deliveries taking place on the islands of Malta and Gozo.

Data collection and Sources of Information

Systematic data collection for NOIS commences once the mother delivers her baby. Information regarding the course and outcome of each pregnancy is recorded by the relevant staff at each centre on a standard NOIS sheet. Infant progress is followed until discharge from hospital or up to a maximum of 28 days after birth. Once the data are recorded, the sheets are forwarded to the DHIR on a regular basis. At the DHIR the relevant sheets are processed and entered into the NOIS database. Data is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 2001.

The maternity centres actively participating in this information system are: Mater Dei Hospital, Gozo General Hospital, St James Hospital Sliema and Zabbar.

Report analysis

This report analyses the national maternities/deliveries and infant births that occurred in the first quarter of 2014 and where appropriate compares it to the figures reported for the same period of last year. The data in this report describes the birth statistics for all deliveries (Maltese and non-Maltese) and infant births registered into the system.

Data is sent to the Registry from all hospitals on the Maltese Islands. Accuracy and completeness of data sent on the NOIS reporting sheets is the responsibility of the Hospital providing data.

This report provides basic statistics regarding births and deliveries in the Maltese Islands. If required, further information and details may be obtained from our website: https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/chief_medical_officer/healthinfor_research/registries/births.aspx or by e-mail: healthinfo@gov.mt

ANALYSIS

There were a total of 1031 maternities/deliveries registered in the Maltese Islands for the first quarter of 2014, which resulted in a total of 1049 infant births.

Comparing these figures with those reported for the same period last year one can see that the number of infant births increased by 66 births (983 *births reported in 1st quarter 2013*).

MATERNITIES / DELIVERIES

MATERNAL AGE, MARITAL STATUS, NATIONALITY AND PARITY

Maternal Age:

The maternities have been grouped according to the standard age groupings and the frequency distribution of deliveries according to maternal age at delivery has been analysed. In the first quarter of 2014, the greatest number of deliveries 349 (33.9%), occurred in the 30-34 year age group, while there were no deliveries in the age group <15 years and one in the 45 and over age group. The minimum age of the mothers was 16 years while the maximum age was 48 years. The most frequent age at delivery was 30 years, and the average age at delivery was 29.8 years.

The frequency distribution of deliveries according to maternal age group is given in the following table.

Table 1 - Deliveries according to maternal age groups

<i>Age group (years)</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>		<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
<15	0	0	1	0.1
15-19	41	4.0	47	4.9
20-24	133	12.9	127	13.2
25-29	309	30.0	309	32.1
30-34	349	33.9	329	34.2
35-39	172	16.7	133	13.8
40-44	26	2.5	16	1.7
45+	1	0.1	1	0.1
Unspecified	0	0	0	0.0

Marital Status:

For the first quarter of 2014, 23.8% (245) of all deliveries occurred to mothers who were reported as single (never married); while 72.6% (749) of all deliveries occurred to mothers reported as married, and 3.6% (37) of mothers were reported as widowed / separated or divorced. Marital status was specified for all mothers.

In the first quarter of 2014, all mothers were registered as having 'Support at home to raise the infant'.

Nationality:

83.8% (864) of all deliveries this quarter occurred to women of Maltese nationality, while 16.0% (165) were of known non-Maltese nationality. In the remaining 0.2% (2) nationality was not specified.

Parity:

In the first quarter of 2014, there were 49.4% (509) of mothers who were primiparas while 50.6% (522) were multiparas, having had one or more live and/or stillbirths before current pregnancy.

MATERNAL LIFESTYLES

There were 79 (7.7%) mothers who were reported to smoke during pregnancy in the first quarter of this year. 4 were reported to drink alcohol and 6 were reported as being illicit drug abusers.

The following table gives the smoking, alcohol and drug habits of mothers for the first quarters of 2014 and 2013.

Table 2 – Maternal Lifestyles

	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>		<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>	
	<i>No.</i>		<i>No.</i>	
<i>Cigarette smoking during pregnancy:</i>				
1 to 3/day	23		14	
>than 3/day	56		76	
Do not smoke	952		873	
Unspecified	0		0	
<i>Alcohol consumption during pregnancy:</i>				
Up to 1unit/day	4		0	
>than 1unit/day	0		0	
None	1027		963	
Unspecified	0		0	
<i>Illicit Drug Abuse during pregnancy</i>				
Yes	6		5	
No	1025		958	
Unspecified	0		0	

SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF PREGNANCY

In the first quarter of 2014, there were 39 cases of assisted reproduction (ART) reported, this includes all forms of ART namely ovulation stimulation, IVF and ICSI (27 cases of ART reported in 1st quarter 2013).

The table below gives the number of mothers reported with specific obstetric conditions during pregnancy. The most frequently recorded was gestational hypertension; there were in fact 6.2% of mothers who were registered as having gestational hypertension in the first quarter of 2014.

Table 1 – Pregnancy related conditions

	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>		<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Antepartum Haemorrhage	18	1.7	6	0.6
Gestational hypertension	64	6.2	50	5.2
Pre-eclampsia	4	0.4	7	0.7
Eclampsia	0	0	0	0.0
Placenta praevia	8	0.8	10	1.0
Abruption of placenta	4	0.4	4	0.4

Diabetes in Pregnancy

In the first quarter of this year, there were 3 mothers who were reported as having Insulin Dependent Diabetes before the current pregnancy, none were reported as having NIDDM before pregnancy. In addition, there were a total of 30 mothers registered with gestational diabetes who were controlled without the use of insulin, and no mothers were registered as having gestational diabetes treated with insulin.

DELIVERIES ACCORDING TO PLURALITY

For the first quarter of 2014, there were a total of 1041 singleton and 16 twin deliveries; there was 1 triplet and no quadruplet deliveries.

Table 2 –Delivery by Plurality

<i>Category</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>
Singleton	1041	943
Twin	16	20
Triplet	1	0
Quadruplet	0	0

INFANT BIRTHS

TOTAL INFANT BIRTHS AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION

In the first quarter of this year, there were a total of 1049 infant births. All infant births of 22 weeks gestation are included in the register.

There were more male infants born than female, the gender distribution for this quarter was 574 (54.7%) males and 475 (45.3%) females (*1st quarter 2013: males – 508; females – 475*).

INFANTS AND METHOD OF BIRTH

Of the 1049 infants born, 652 (62.2%) were delivered as a vertex delivery, 354 (33.7%) by emergency or elective Caesarean Section and 43 (4.1%) by assisted vaginal delivery (includes forceps, ventouse and breech).

Table 3 – Distribution of births by method of delivery*

	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>
Infants delivered by vertex delivery	652	606
Infants delivered by emergency/elective Caesarean Section	354	331
Infants delivered by forceps	4	3
Infants delivered by ventouse	37	41
Breech deliveries	2	2

**Data presented according to total infant births*

This quarter there were 354 babies born by caesarean section but 336 caesarean deliveries performed, this due to the fact that a number of caesarians are done in multiple birth deliveries. The Caesarean section operation rate was 32.6% of the total maternal deliveries (1031) this quarter.

BIRTHS BY GESTATIONAL AGE CATEGORY

This quarter there were 77 (7.3%) preterm babies of less than 37 weeks gestation. 10 (1.0%) were very preterm being less than 32 weeks of gestation.

Table 4 – Distribution by gestational age categories

	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>
Extremely Preterm (22 - 27 wks)	6	7
Very Preterm (28 - 31 wks)	4	4
Moderately Preterm (32 - 36wks)	67	66
Term (37 - 41wks)	972	905
Post term (>41 wks)	0	1
Unknown	0	0

INFANT BIRTH WEIGHTS

In the first quarter of 2014, there were 970 (92.5%) of the total births that occurred in the birth weight range of 2500g to 4499g. 63 (6.0%) of the total births were in the low birth weight range of 1500g to 2499g, 11 (1.0%) of births were of very low birth weight 500g to 1499g. In one case the birth weight was unspecified. Three babies were reported with a birth weight of 4500g or more. One baby was of gestation 22 weeks but had a birth weight of less than 500g.

Table 5 – Births by birth weight

	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>
<500g	1	2
500-999g	3	4
1000-1499g	8	6
1500-1999g	8	12
2000-2499g	55	47
2500-2999g	222	235
3000-3499g	437	396
3500-3999g	265	238
4000-4499g	46	39
4500-4999g	2	4
5000+	1	0
Unspecified	1	0
Average Birth weight (g)	3217	3200

OUTCOME OF BIRTH

The number of live births for the first quarter of this year was 1042 which accounted for 99.3% of the total births at a national level. The remaining 7 births were stillbirths. Stillbirths are defined as fetal death at or after 22 completed weeks of gestation.

Table 6 – Live and still births

<i>Outcome of Birth</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>
Babies born alive	1042	979
Stillbirths	7	4

Of the 1042 live births this quarter, there were 3 early neonatal deaths and no late neonatal deaths.

Table 7 – Early and late neonatal deaths

<i>Neonatal Deaths</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>
Early Neonatal deaths	3	4
Late Neonatal deaths	0	1

INFANT FEEDING METHODS AT DISCHARGE

Infant feeding habits are recorded by hospital staff at the time of discharge; little can be said on the actual infant feeding habits as these may change soon after discharge from the birthing facilities.

Table 8 – Infant feeding methods at time of discharge

	<i>1st Quarter 2014</i>	<i>1st Quarter 2013</i>
Breast only	632	538
Bottle only	268	293
Mixed (Breast & Bottle)	139	143
Other*	10	9
Unspecified	0	0

* 'Other' - include babies who are still at hospital after 28 days and those who die before discharge

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Mater Dei Hospital, Tal-Qroqq l/o Msida

Gozo General Hospital, Victoria

St. James Hospital, Sliema

St. James Hospital, Zabbar