



***NATIONAL OBSTETRIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (NOIS)***

***MALTA***

*First Quarterly Report: January to March 2013*

*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](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 2013 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](https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/chief_medical_officer/healthinfor_research/registries/births.aspx) or by e-mail: [healthinfo@gov.mt](mailto:healthinfo@gov.mt)

## **ANALYSIS**

There were a total of 963 maternities/deliveries registered in the Maltese Islands for the first quarter of 2013, which resulted in a total of 983 infant births.

Comparing these figures with those reported for the same period last year one can see that the number of infant births decreased by 26 births (1009 births reported in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2012).

## **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 2013, the greatest number of deliveries 329 (34.2%), occurred in the 30-34 year age group, while there was one delivery in the age group <15 years and one in the 45 and over age group. The minimum age of the mothers was 13 years while the maximum age was 48 years. The most frequent age at delivery was 30 years, and the average age at delivery was 29.2 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>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>		<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
<15	1	0.1	0	0.0
15-19	47	4.9	49	5.0
20-24	127	13.2	136	13.8
25-29	309	32.1	290	29.4
30-34	329	34.2	342	34.7
35-39	133	13.8	140	14.2
40-44	16	1.7	27	2.7
45+	1	0.1	1	0.1
Unspecified	0	0.0	0	0.0

#### *Marital Status:*

For the first quarter of 2013, 27.0% (260) of all deliveries occurred to mothers who were reported as single (never married); while 69.1% (665) of all deliveries occurred to mothers reported as married, and 3.9% (38) of mothers were reported as widowed / separated or divorced. Marital status was specified for all mothers.

In the first quarter of 2013, all mothers were registered as having 'Support at home to raise the infant'.

#### *Nationality:*

88.4% (851) of all deliveries this quarter occurred to women of Maltese nationality, while 11.5% (111) were of known non-Maltese nationality. In the remaining 0.1% (1) nationality was not specified.

#### *Parity:*

In the first quarter of 2013, there were 52.9% (509) of mothers who were primiparas while 47.1% (454) were multiparas, having had one or more live and/or stillbirths before current pregnancy.

**MATERNAL LIFESTYLES**

There were 90 (9.3%) mothers who were reported to smoke during pregnancy in the first quarter of this year. None were reported to drink alcohol and 5 were reported as being illicit drug abusers.

The following table gives the smoking, alcohol and drug habits of mothers for the first quarters of 2013 and 2012.

**Table 2 – Maternal Lifestyles**

	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
<b><i>Cigarette smoking during pregnancy:</i></b>		
1 to 3/day	14	17
>than 3/day	76	60
Do not smoke	873	907
Unspecified	0	1
<b><i>Alcohol consumption during pregnancy:</i></b>		
Up to 1unit/day	0	2
>than 1unit/day	0	0
None	963	983
Unspecified	0	0
<b><i>Illicit Drug Abuse during pregnancy</i></b>		
Yes	5	4
No	958	981
Unspecified	0	0

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF PREGNANCY**

In the first quarter of 2013, there were 27 cases of assisted reproduction (ART) reported, this includes all forms of ART namely ovulation stimulation, IVF and ICSI (22 cases of ART reported in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2012).

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 5.2% of mothers who were registered as having gestational hypertension in the first quarter of 2013.

**Table 1 – Pregnancy related conditions**

	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013</i>		<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Antepartum Haemorrhage	6	0.6	19	1.9
Gestational hypertension	50	5.2	50	5.1
Pre-eclampsia	7	0.7	7	0.7
Eclampsia	0	0.0	0	0.0
Placenta praevia	10	1.0	10	1.0
Abruption of placenta	4	0.4	3	0.3

***Diabetes in Pregnancy***

In the first quarter of this year, there were 4 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 33 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 2013, there were a total of 943 (97.9%) singleton and 20 (2.1%) twin deliveries; there were no triplet or quadruplet deliveries.

**Table 2 –Delivery by Plurality**

<i>Category</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>
Singleton	943	963
Twin	20	20
Triplet	0	2
Quadruplet	0	0

## **INFANT BIRTHS**

### **TOTAL INFANT BIRTHS AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION**

In the first quarter of this year, there were a total of 983 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 508 (51.7%) males and 475 (48.3%) females (*1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2012: males –531; females – 478*).

### **INFANTS AND METHOD OF BIRTH**

Of the 983 infants born, 606 (61.6%) were delivered as a vertex delivery, 331 (33.7%) by emergency or elective Caesarean Section and 46 (4.7%) by assisted vaginal delivery (includes forceps, ventouse and breech).

**Table 3 – Distribution of births by method of delivery\***

	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>
Infants delivered by vertex delivery	606	605
Infants delivered by emergency/elective Caesarean Section	331	362
Infants delivered by forceps	3	4
Infants delivered by ventouse	41	37
Breech deliveries	2	1

*\*Data presented according to total infant births*

This quarter there were 331 babies born by caesarean section but 312 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 32.4% of the total maternal deliveries (963) this quarter.

### **BIRTHS BY GESTATIONAL AGE CATEGORY**

This quarter there were 77 (7.8%) preterm babies of less than 37 weeks gestation. 11 (1.1%) were very preterm being less than 32 weeks of gestation.

**Table 4 – Distribution by gestational age categories**

	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>
<b>Extremely Preterm (22 - 27 wks)</b>	7	6
<b>Very Preterm (28 - 31 wks)</b>	4	8
<b>Moderately Preterm (32 - 36wks)</b>	66	77
<b>Term (37 - 41wks)</b>	905	918
<b>Post term (&gt;41 wks)</b>	1	0
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0

**INFANT BIRTH WEIGHTS**

In the first quarter of 2013, there were 908 (92.4%) of the total births that occurred in the birth weight range of 2500g to 4499g. 59 (6.0%) of the total births were in the low birth weight range of 1500g to 2499g, 10 (1.0%) of births were of very low birth weight 500g to 1499g. In no cases was the birth weight unspecified. Four babies were reported with a birth weight more than 4500g. Two babies were of gestation 22 weeks but had a birth weight of less than 500g.

**Table 5 – Births by birth weight**

	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>
<500g	2	2
500-999g	4	4
1000-1499g	6	8
1500-1999g	12	16
2000-2499g	47	52
2500-2999g	235	211
3000-3499g	396	446
3500-3999g	238	234
4000-4499g	39	36
4500-4999g	4	0
5000+	0	0
Unspecified	0	0
Average Birth weight (g)	3200	3183

**OUTCOME OF BIRTH**

The number of live births for the first quarter of this year was 979 which accounted for 99.6% of the total births at a national level. The remaining 4 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>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>
Babies born alive	979	1006
Stillbirths	4	3

Of the 979 live births this quarter, there were 4 early neonatal deaths and 1 late neonatal death.

**Table 7 – Early and late neonatal deaths**

<i>Neonatal Deaths</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>
Early Neonatal deaths	4	5
Late Neonatal deaths	1	0

**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>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2013</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012</i>
Breast only	538	578
Bottle only	293	277
Mixed (Breast & Bottle)	143	146
Other*	9	8
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

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St. James Hospital, Sliema

St. James Hospital, Zabbar