



Hinchingsbrooke School Science Department

KS3 Homework Task

Scientific Enquiry HW2 - Home or Hospital?

Date set:

Date Due in:

On the following page is information related to the task. You may need to do additional research to achieve the maximum level possible.

- Answer all questions, if you use PowerPoint please print off and stick in your book
- Fill in your details below

Name:	Form:
Teacher:	Science Set:

Feedback from teacher:

Student comment:

Home or hospital?

A study of the data for all home births (babies born at England and Wales between 1994 and 2003, has shown that a baby may be at serious risk if a mother who has chosen to give birth at home is then transferred to hospital. However, not everyone is happy with the findings of the study.



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The study divided 'home births' into three groups: planned home births, when at 12 weeks pregnant, a mother chooses to give birth at home and does so; unplanned home births, when a mother intends to give birth in hospital, but gives birth before she arrives; home to hospital 'transfers', when a mother changes her mind because of complications in pregnancy or simple choice, or is transferred during labour because of an emergency. The study looked at the risk to the baby in each group, and the overall risk for all births, at home and in hospital.

The study showed that the risk to the baby was lowest in the 'planned home birth' group. The risk was highest in the 'home to hospital transfers' group, where the risk was eight times higher than the overall risk for all births, and 12 times higher than the risk for the 'planned home birth' group.

Critics of these findings say they are not reliable. A spokesperson from the National Childbirth Trust says, 'You are not comparing like with like'. She also said that the 'transferred' group was made up of births where problems were either expected or happening, so this group should be compared with births in hospital where the problems developed, not with all births. Other critics say that the data about transfers is inconsistent because it comes from many other studies.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What does 'home to hospital transfers' mean in the study?
- 2 How does the risk to the baby in the 'transferred' group compare with the overall risk for all births and the risk for the 'planned home birth' group?
- 3 The risk to the baby was lowest in the 'planned home birth' group. Discuss whether or not this means that giving birth at home is safer than giving birth in hospital. Give reasons for the answer you choose.
- 4 In your own words, explain why the spokesperson from the National Childbirth Trust thought that it was misleading to compare risk in the 'home to hospital transfers' group with overall risk for all births.
- 5 Less than 2% of births are home births. This was 10 752 births during the study. Do you think this is a suitable sample size for the study?
- 6 Why might taking the data for 'home to hospital transfers' from many other studies make the study less consistent?