Development and evaluation of the OASI Care Bundle: A quality improvement project to reduce the rates of severe perineal trauma

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Theme: Putting research and evidence into practice

**Background:** Third and fourth degree perineal tears, or obstetric anal sphincter injuries (OASI), sustained during childbirth can result in anal incontinence and psychosocial problems. OASI rates in the UK tripled from 1.8% in 2000 to 5.9% in 2011, amounting to 70,000 women being affected during this period [1]. In response, a team of clinical and methodological experts developed an evidenced-based care bundle. A care bundle is a small set of interventions that, when implemented together, result in significantly better outcomes than when implemented individually [2]. The OASI Care Bundle comprises four elements and good communication underpins each element.

**Project Aims:** This quality improvement project aims to reduce OASI rates. Implementation of the OASI Care Bundle is aided by a skills development module and an awareness campaign.

**Methods and analysis:** A theory of change outlines the inputs, short-term and long-term outcomes and provides an evaluation framework. From January 2017 over a 12-month period, 16 hospital sites across England, Wales and Scotland will participate in the study, with sequential roll-out in 4 blocks (regions) of 4 sites. The care bundle will be evaluated using a stepped-wedge design. Quantitative analyses will examine OASI rates. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with clinicians will evaluate acceptability, sustainability, coverage and feasibility of the care bundle and interviews with women will explore their experiences. Initial results are encouraging with good uptake of the care bundle and small decreases in OASI rates.

**Dissemination:** Leadership for the OASI Care Bundle is provided by the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). This high profile endorsement has provided unity. If found to be effective and feasible the OASI Care Bundle will be shared with midwives, obstetricians and women accessing maternity services, using the communication channels available to the RCM and RCOG.

**References:**