

## Seminar 17: **Development and evaluations of the OASI Care Bundle: A quality improvements project to reduce the rates of severe perineal trauma**

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**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 to address this trend. 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 between clinicians (midwives or obstetricians) and women underpins each component.

**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 was developed to outline the inputs, short-term and long-term outcomes and provide an evaluation framework. The care bundle will be evaluated using a stepped-wedge design. 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. 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:** The project is a collaboration between 2 national professional bodies, an NHS hospital trust and an academic institution. If found to be effective, feasible and acceptable, the OASI Care Bundle will be shared with midwives and women accessing maternity services, using the communication channels available to the professional bodies.

### References:

1. Gurol-Urganci I, et al., *Third- and fourth-degree perineal tears among primiparous women in England between 2000 and 2012: time trends and risk factors*. BJOG 2013 **120**(12): 1516-25.
2. Improvement IfH. Bundle up for safety [cited 2015 26 June 2015]. Available from: <http://www.ihf.org/resources/Pages/ImprovementStories/BundleUpforSafety.aspx>.