

# Pregnancy and Childbirth: progress with a DUETS module

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## Database of Uncertainties about the Effects of Treatments (DUETs)

### What is DUETs?

DUETs publishes uncertainties about the effects of treatment that cannot be answered by reliable up-to-date systematic reviews.

### DUETs identifies uncertainties from

- patients', carers' and clinicians' questions about the effects of treatments
- research recommendations in systematic reviews and clinical guidelines
- ongoing systematic reviews and 'primary' studies

DUETs does not include questions about the frequency, causes and diagnosis of health problems.

### Identifying uncertainties relevant to patients and clinicians

Research on the effects of treatments too often fails to address questions that matter to patients, and to the clinicians to whom they turn for help. So DUETs gives priority to questions asked by patients and clinicians, while also noting therapeutic uncertainties identified through systematic reviews, clinical guidelines, and other formal mechanisms.

### The story so far

January 2007, decided to focus on hypertension in pregnancy and care during the third stage of labour. Potential sources for uncertainties:

- patient groups (such as Action on Pre-eclampsia, National Childbirth Trust)
- individual women
- clinician groups and societies (such as the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, British Association of Perinatal Medicine)
- individual clinicians
- systematic reviews (such as Cochrane Reviews, Clinical Evidence and NICE guidelines)

May 2008, scope extended to 'Pregnancy and Childbirth'. Currently there are 19 published uncertainties.

### Potential sources for developing the DUETs Pregnancy and Childbirth Module

- web-based surveys of women to invite uncertainties
- workshops for women to raise awareness of the role of research, and to invite uncertainties
- text mining of web sites to identify patient uncertainties
- web-based surveys of clinicians to invite uncertainties
- clinical guidelines developed by professional groups and societies
- Cochrane reviews, Clinical Evidence and NICE guidelines

### Pregnancy and Childbirth Module

#### Uncertainties from patients

Is ECT is more effective and/or safer for the fetus, in severe depressive states, during the perinatal period than antidepressant medication?

Is antidepressant medication safe for the fetus and mother if taken during pregnancy?

Does Seretide affect pregnancy?

What is the impact of working or stress for a pregnant women who has increased blood pressure that has not reached the threshold for being called 'hypertension'?

#### Uncertainties from research recommendations

Garlic, or garlic preparations, to prevent pre-eclampsia and its complications.

How often should blood pressure be measured in healthy pregnant women and when is the best time to do this?

What is the minimum effective dose of magnesium sulphate for women with pre-eclampsia, and when should it be started?

What effect does exercise have on blood pressure and the incidence of pre-eclampsia?

#### Outcomes highlighted by patients

*For the women*  
maternal mortality  
fertility  
maternal complications

*Other outcomes*  
safety  
adverse effects

*For the children*  
fetal abnormality  
intrauterine death  
infant development

#### Outcomes from research recommendations

*For the women*  
death or serious maternal morbidity  
pre-eclampsia and its complications  
high blood pressure  
use of antihypertensive drugs  
abruption of placenta or antepartum haemorrhage  
caesarean section  
postpartum haemorrhage  
short and long term benefits and adverse effects  
admission to hospital and clinic visits  
pregnancy outcome  
disruption to family and working life  
women's experiences and views  
costs for the women and their families

*For the children*  
perinatal death  
preterm birth  
small-for-gestational age  
weight at birth  
endotracheal intubation or mechanical ventilation  
serious neonatal morbidity  
short and long term benefits and adverse effects  
adverse events during childhood  
blood pressure during childhood  
infant and child development  
long term morbidity  
use of hospital resources

*Other outcomes*  
side effects  
costs to the health services  
costs to society