

A Practice Improvement Project to Reduce Cesarean Surgical Site Infection Rates

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In the United States, cesarean birth is the most common surgical procedure performed on women of childbearing age (Conroy et al., 2012). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2014, 1,284,160 women experienced a cesarean birth, which accounted for 32.2% of all births in the United States (Hamilton, Martin, Osterman, Curtin, & Matthews, 2015). Although the number is down slightly from the 32.8% reported in the 2010 through 2012 data, these numbers remain high despite recent efforts by those in the obstetric health care community (Bingham, Ruhl, & Cockey, 2013) to reduce nonmedically indicated cesarean births and the induction of labor before 39 weeks gestation. Puerperal infections are recognized as one of the major causes of maternal mortality, as are postpartum hemorrhage, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, embolism, and cardiovascular events (Creanga et al., 2015). These maternal causes of death are essentially the same worldwide (Conroy et al., 2012).

Abstract: We implemented an evidence-based practice improvement project at a health care facility in the Midwestern United States to address the increasing rate of cesarean surgical site infections. Women who experienced cesarean birth were cared for using a standardized evidence-based protocol including preoperative and postoperative care and education. In addition, a team-created educational video was used by both women and their families during the postoperative period and at home after discharge. This new protocol resulted in a decrease in the rate of cesarean surgical site infections from 1.35% in 2013 to 0.7% in 2014 and 0.36% in 2015. Our interdisciplinary approach to integrate best-practice strategies resulted in decreased infection rates and improved patient satisfaction scores. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nwh.2016.10.006>

Keywords: cesarean | cesarean surgical site infection | patient education | postoperative infection





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