

The use of lumbar epidural analgesia for people having vaginal twin births

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Background and Aims

- Twins are often born by caesarean section (CS) because of risks of vaginal birth
- People pregnant with twins however may have vaginal births if eligible
- Lumbar epidural analgesia (LEAna) is considered ideal analgesia for vaginal twin birth offers effective analgesia
 - facilitates obstetric manoeuvres
 - expediates birth of the second twin
 - facilitates emergency surgery
 - has fewer maternal and neonatal adverse effects than other analgesia modes
- Whilst the UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline recommends LEAna it is still not universally recognised as the preferred mode of analgesia for vaginal twin birth
- This study aimed to investigate the use of LEA analgesia for vaginal twin birth in a high-income tertiary referral centre

Methods

- After institutional ethics approval (RWH HREC AQA 20/50) a retrospective cohort study was undertaken
- All people who gave birth to twins in a two-year period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020 were identified and included
- Participant and neonatal characteristics, use of LEAna, mode of birth, and complications related to LEAna were collected

Results

- Mean (SD) age, body mass index and gestation were 33 (4.8) years, 25 (5.5) kg/m² and 37 (2.3) weeks respectively. The participant flow chart is shown in Figure 1

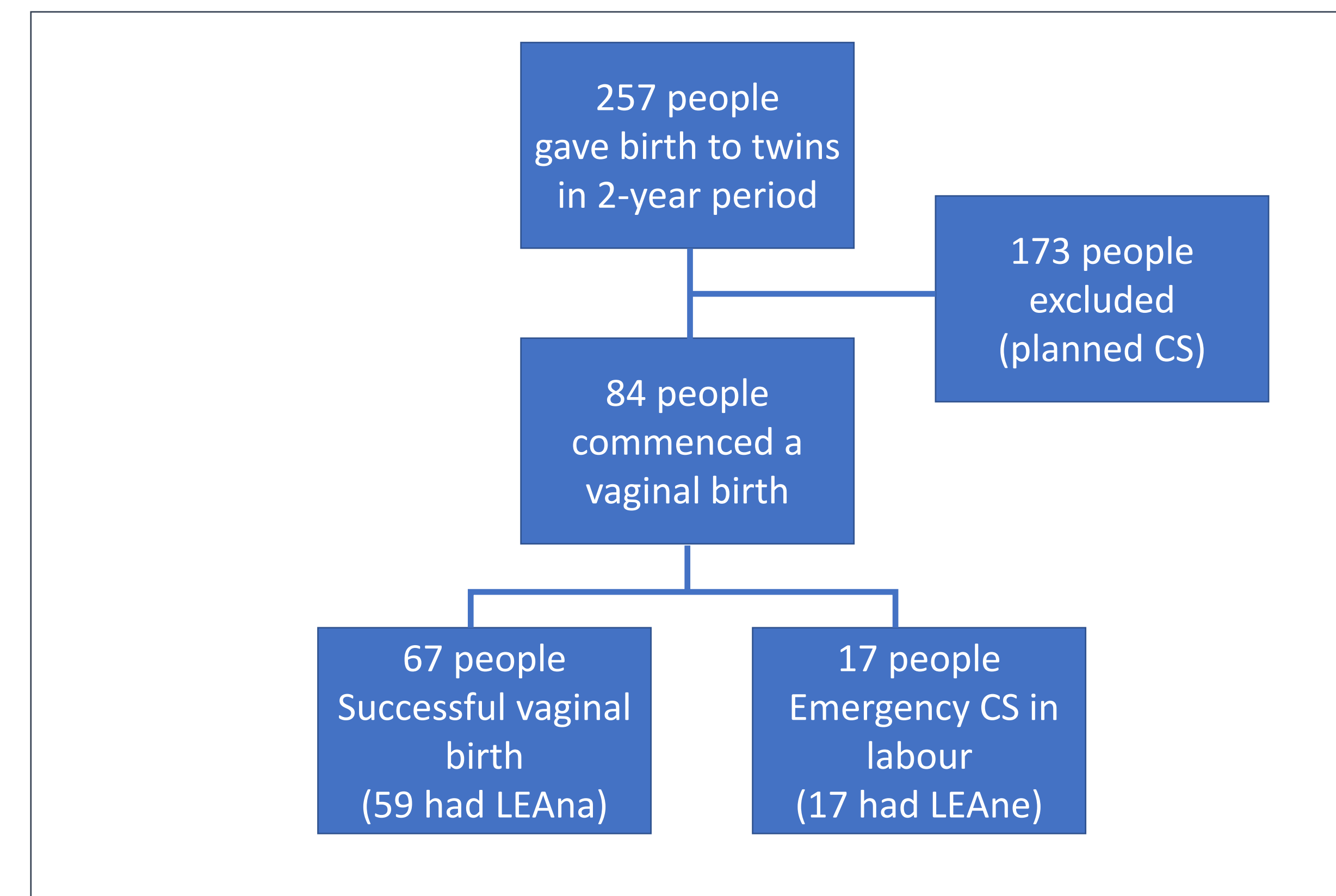


Figure 1 Participant flow chart CS= caesarean section, LEAna = lumbar epidural analgesia, LEAne=lumbar epidural anesthesia

- Of the 134 babies born vaginally, successful obstetric manoeuvres were performed for 52 (39%), highlighting the benefits of LEAna
- The most common LEAna related adverse event in labour was hypotension requiring drug treatment in 11 (14.5%) people

Key Messages

- LEAna facilitated successful obstetric manoeuvres for over one in three babies born vaginally
- Nine out of 10 people pregnant with twins who were eligible for vaginal twin birth and were eligible for LEAna received LEAna
- Whilst 20% of people chosen to be suitable for vaginal birth for twins experienced an emergency CS in labour, there was a 100% success rate of conversion of LEAna to LEAne for these people mitigating some risks of surgery



Conclusion and Future Work

- Further study into LEAna related hypotensive events and their prevention in twin pregnancies is needed
- Consideration should be given to updating clinical guidelines to recommend LEAna be used for all eligible people undergoing vaginal twin birth