

Twin Labelling: Which method do parents think is best?



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Background

Antenatal labelling of twins one and two leads to confusion and parental distress in the 10% of cases where twin two is born first¹. Additionally, it can result in clinical errors where inappropriate medical intervention is instigated in the presence of discordant fetal anomalies and errors in linking pre- and post-natal follow-up. NICE Guidance advises using “lateral or vertical orientation” but does not consider birth order.

In our centre we have proposed adoption of a new system labelling twins either A or B antenatally and then, after delivery as one or two, depending on birth order. Postnatally, twins would be called 1(A) and 2(B), if twin A was born first.



Image 1²

Objectives

- To establish parents’ views on current twin labelling and the proposed new system.

Methods

- 20 expectant mothers were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire.
- The following questions were asked;

➤	Are you aware you aware that your twins are labelled “twin one” and “twin two” whilst in the womb?
➤	Do you know why your twins are labelled this way?
➤	If the labelling of your twins was swapped at birth, due to birth order, would that be significant to you?
➤	Does the new labelling system make sense?
➤	Do you think the new labelling system is a better than the current?

Results

- 90% (18/20) of women were aware their twins were labelled one and two, but only 45% (9/20) of women understood this reflected presentation.
- 20% (4/20) of women said it would be significant to them if the labelling of twins changed at delivery.
- 90% (18/20) of women understood the new system and thought it was an improvement on the current labelling system.

Conclusion

- The results confirm that the proposed labelling system is acceptable and comprehensive for expectant parents and shows promise for reducing labelling errors in the future.
- Larger studies are now required to confirm these findings and ensure expectant parents remain satisfied by this new system.

References

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2. UNSW Sydney. Semi-identical twins identified in pregnancy for first time [Internet]. 2019. [Accessed 29/12/19]. Available from: <https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/health/semi-identical-twins-identified-pregnancy-first-time>