

UNPLANNED OUT-OF-HOSPITAL BIRTH: DATA FROM A REGIONAL UNIT IN CENTRAL GREECE

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Objective: In Greece, the majority of births take place in hospitals. Unplanned out-of-hospital birth can be described as childbirth without presence of midwife and/or medical care. The aim of this study was to collect data from unplanned out-of-hospital deliveries recorded in a secondary Greek hospital.

Design-method: We conducted a retrospective study of vaginal deliveries registered during a five-year period in a public maternity ward of a regional unit in Central Greece. We recorded out-of-hospital births that took place entirely in a pre-hospital setting (childbirth and placenta delivery in the community) or labors completed in our hospital (out-of-hospital childbirth and placenta delivery in-hospital).

We documented women's parity, newborn's birth weight, and the need for referral to a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

Results: Between May 2017 and April 2022, a total number of 2153 births were recorded in the maternity ward of our hospital; 6 were unplanned out-of-hospital births, i.e. incidence 0,28%. In particularly in a total number of 815 vaginal deliveries, incidence rate was 0,74%. 2 out of 6 unplanned deliveries were performed entirely in an out-of-hospital environment (including placenta delivery). All 6 women were multipara and 2 of them were grand multipara. One labor was preterm (gestational age: 28 weeks) complicated by severe preeclampsia and resulted in stillbirth. The mean birth weight of neonates was 2426g (800-3310g). Only one male neonate necessitated admission in NICU due to respiratory problem (transient tachypnea).

Conclusions: Globally, prevalence of unplanned out-of-hospital deliveries is estimated between 0.19% and 0.61%. Our data are in agreement with the incidence rate in the existing literature. Multiparity, low birth weight and prematurity are considered to be risk factors for an unplanned out-of-hospital delivery. Out-of-hospital birth is associated with unfavorable perinatal outcome with neonatal hypothermia being the most frequently described complication. According to Greek clinical guidelines, giving birth in a maternity/hospital is the safest option, due to the existence of specialized and trained personnel, safety protocols and equipment.

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