

# Perceptions of Consent for Operative Vaginal Delivery: A Service Evaluation

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## Introduction

- In the UK, a woman gives birth every **54 seconds**, many for the first time.
- Despite the recognised importance of informed consent in medical practice, some women continue to report they are asked to consent to procedures which they say they **do not fully understand**.
- Our project aims to **interrogate the patient experience of consent for operative vaginal delivery** in a tertiary NHS maternity unit and make suggestions to improve information delivery.

## Methods

- Survey disseminated over social media by the Oxfordshire Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership, as well as by poster and QR code on delivery suite and the postpartum ward
- Target population: Women and birthing people who had experienced operative vaginal delivery (forceps or ventouse) over the last two years
- Survey responses collected from Febuary-August 2024
- Free text response were analysed with inductive thematic analysis

## Conclusions

- Our results suggest many women retrospectively wished for more antenatal information about operative vaginal delivery.
- Some are receiving information on operative vaginal delivery from sources which are not always verified (eg social media), which could lead to misinformation.
- We propose to support conversations around consent to operative vaginal delivery during labour via more structured antenatal discussions on assisted delivery. This could be in a midwife appointment.
- Given the pressures faced by NHS staff, further research is needed to understand the challenges that could be faced when implementing more uniform discussion of operative vaginal delivery in the antenatal period.

## Results

