

Choosing a Cesarean Birth - A Forum to Discuss the Issues

Hosted by the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health

Speakers:

*Vicki Van Wagner,
&
Dr. David Young*

Moderator:

Linda Kelly, Host, Canada Now, CBC Television

June 16th, 7-9pm

Parker Reception Room, IWK Health Centre, Halifax, NS

C-Sections have received a lot of media attention lately for several reasons. Most recently, interest was sparked by the suggestion that the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada was in support of women's right to choose to have a cesarean birth. However, the debate really began with discussions of celebrities who were choosing c-sections because they were "too posh to push." This refers more generally to women who are said to choose a c-section because they want to schedule birth and control the amount of time it takes- among other reasons. The Canadian Institute for Health Information also released a report that sparked further interest in this debate. This report concluded that c-section rates were higher than ever in Canada. The average rate of C-sections in Canada during 2001-2002 was 22.5%, up from 15% in 1979. This means that surgery is being used to birth one in four babies in this country. This second story is said to be related to the first: that the C-section rate is high because more and more women are requesting C-sections when there are no medical indications for them. However, at the same time that women are choosing C-sections, they are also choosing to go the 'natural' route and some do so under the care of midwives. In those provinces where midwifery is regulated, there are not enough midwives to answer to the demand.

It is our hope that this forum will allow for an informed and evidence-based discussion of this complex issue. Should women be offered the choice to have a C-section when there are no medical indications? What influences their decision? Why does birthing matter? What factors should and do determine the options available to women and which ones can account for the cesarean birth rate? These are some of the questions that will be addressed at this forum. We hope that you will participate in this event. For more information contact Christine Saulnier, Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health at christine.saulnier@dal.ca.

Bios

Vicki Van Wagner is a Registered Midwife working in the Toronto Midwives Collective as well as the Innuulitsivik Health Centre, Nunavik Quebec. She is also an Associate Professor in Ryerson University's Midwifery Programme and a PhD candidate, York University.

Dr. David Young is a professor and head of obstetrics and gynaecology at Dalhousie University and IWK Health Centre in Halifax, NS. He is also the president of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada.