

Research Highlights

The Birth after Caesarean Study

The purpose of this research is to explore how decisions for birth after caesarean are made in BC, and to develop tailored resources that support women to make shared decisions for future mode of delivery. For more about the study, visit www.sarahmunro.ca.

What is this research about?

Vaginal birth after caesarean (VBAC) is considered a safe option for most women with a previous caesarean. However, in British Columbia only 20% of eligible women attempt a VBAC. Phase 1 of our research was a qualitative exploration to understand how women, care providers, and health service managers make choices for mode of delivery (2015-16). Interviews were conducted with 57 participants in five communities in Northern and Fraser health authorities.

We found that women lack clear, consistent information about their options. Women form a preference for next mode of delivery in the early postpartum after their primary caesarean. They base their choices on their first birth experience and information from peers and the Internet. Care providers provide information on clinical risks and benefits after women have formed a preference. We are currently testing our Phase 1 findings in a survey with care providers across Fraser Health Authority.

These findings suggest there is a need to create consistent, evidence-based resources to support shared decision-making for birth after caesarean.

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QUICK FACTS

The Birth after Caesarean Study is a partnership between researchers at UBC, Dartmouth College, regional health authorities, and patient advocates.

There is a need to create consistent, evidence-based resources to support shared decision-making for birth after caesarean.

We will be developing and testing resources with women and their communities to ensure they meet women's needs.

Patient and community partners are critical for this research. They can help guide the study, co-develop the resources, and help test them with women.

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What is shared decision-making?

Shared decision-making includes discussion of risks and benefits, actively listening to the woman's values, helping the woman understand what factors of the decision matter most to her, and making a decision together.

What decision-making resources are being developed?

We are creating a handout and interactive "patient decision aid" website in partnership with the Power to Push Campaign (www.powertopush.ca), an internationally recognized patient website on options for mode of delivery. These resources will include accurate risk estimates, information on the medical, personal, and social attributes of the decision, including mental health concerns, and describe the available resources and time required to attend a caesarean in different communities.

What is the role of women and community partners in this research?

It is critical to involve women and community partners in the development of these resources. There are many ways to get involved:

- Brainstorming local research questions that are relevant to birth after caesarean decision-making in different communities;
- Providing feedback and advice on the content, design, and implementation of the handout and patient decision aid website;
- Recruiting and facilitating focus groups with women to assess how useful and relevant the tools are for postpartum women who are considering next mode of birth after a primary caesarean;
- Providing a letter of support when we apply for additional grant funding. We will be seeking funding so that we can remunerate patient and community partners involved in the research.

How do I get involved?

Please contact us:

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*Thank you to the organizations
who are involved in this research:*

