

Study: Caesarean babies more likely to die

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A U.S. study finds babies born by Caesarean section are nearly three times more likely to die during the first month of life than those born naturally.

The research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta is said to be the first to examine death rates of babies born by elective Caesarean or when there's no medical need for the procedure.

Study leader Marian MacDorman of the CDC said: "Neonatal deaths are rare for low-risk women -- of the order of one death per 1,000 live births. But even after we adjusted for socioeconomic and medical risk factors, the difference persisted."

The study involved more than 5.7 million U.S. births and 12,000 deaths occurring within 28 days of birth from 1998-2001.

In women defined as low-risk, the average rate of neonatal death was 0.62 per 1,000 vaginal births. In Caesarean births, low-risk mothers were nearly three times more likely to lose their child, at a rate of 1.77 per 1,000 births.

The research appears in the journal *Birth: Issues in Perinatal Care*.

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