

QCMB research examines the myths behind Queensland's rising caesarean rates

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Researchers from UQ's Queensland Centre for Mothers & Babies have explored the reasons for the rising rates of caesarean sections in Queensland.

With caesarean rates increasing by 74 percent in the past 20 years, Professor Sue Kruske, director of the QCMB, said there is a myth among the health industry that women are driving the increases in the [caesarean section](#) rates.

“Some of the most commonly quoted reasons for the increase include the rising age of women having babies and the demand of women in the private hospitals for non-medically indicated caesarean sections, the ‘too posh to push’ women,” Professor Kruske said.

Professor Kruske said the QCMB research was based on a survey of more than 22,000 Queensland mums every two years, and aimed to discover what their maternity experience was like.

“When it comes to caesarean sections, our research shows the increase seems to be largely driven by the recommendations of doctors, particularly in private hospitals where Queensland has the highest rate of caesarean section deliveries (47.9 percent) in Australia.

“This would indicate the notion that women are choosing to have a caesarean because they are ‘too posh to push’ is incorrect.”

Professor Kruske said the trend towards caesarean sections was alarming with 34 percent of all births in Queensland now caesarean compared to 19.5 percent in 1989.

“Our research indicates women are not making properly informed decisions when it comes to caesarean deliveries,” she said.

“Notably, only about half of all women (52.4 percent) birthing in public and private facilities reported making an informed decision to have a planned caesarean before labour.

“And only one-fifth (19.9 percent) of women made an informed decision to have a caesarean section when the procedure was unplanned.”

Professor Kruske said the QCMB was about to undertake the latest instalment of the Having a Baby in Queensland Survey in the next few months.

“The survey is crucial to understanding women's needs and preferences for improved maternity care in Queensland,” she said.

Provided by University of Queensland

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