Study: Wide hospital quality gap on maternity care

August 4 2014, by Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar

A new study finds that where a woman delivers her baby can make a major difference to her own health.

Researchers comparing hospitals nationwide found that women who delivered at low-performing facilities suffered more than twice the rate of major complications for vaginal births.

For cesarean section deliveries, the disparity was even greater: nearly a fivefold difference.

The quality gap remains largely hidden from mothers-to-be.

There's no comprehensive source that women and their families can rely on to find the best hospitals ahead of time.

Medical groups are working on a consumer-friendly database that will use information from electronic medical records. But that could take another three to five years.

The study is in Monday's issue of *Health Affairs*.

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Citation: Study: Wide hospital quality gap on maternity care (2014, August 4) retrieved 23 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-08-wide-hospital-quality-gap-maternity.html

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