

Response to 2018-LT-22443

We thank Drs Ricciardi and Haydar for their comments(1) on our paper describing consensus development of indicators for use to support maternity service quality improvement(2). We fully agree that good quality routine data collection is essential to support ongoing quality improvement. Use for monthly monitoring, such as we describe, should help drive ongoing improvement in the quality of data as well as the quality of care.

When developing any set of indicators, or core outcomes, there are several considerations which are critical to practical application of the final indicator set. One of the main problems identified with hospital maternity indicator sets ('dashboards') in England has been an excess of indicators (3). The purpose of the exercise we describe was to produce a manageable (10 to 15) set of metrics that would enable maternity units and trusts to monitor their performance on a monthly basis across the full range of women delivering in their unit. To include outcomes for many more groups of women across all delivery methods would result in much more work in recording and collating the data and quite possibly, as a consequence, lower compliance. It is also important to note that the low numbers that would result in many outcome groups if the entire 10-group classification were used would also make it difficult, if not impossible, to make meaningful comparisons on a monthly basis.

We would fully support wider use of the 10-Group Classification System for large data sets, as is the case in the work by Hehir and colleagues(4) further described by Robson(5). Nevertheless, for the pragmatic purposes of monthly monitoring, we maintain that our more limited use of this categorisation is appropriate.

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1. Ricciardi P, Haydar A. Letter. BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. 2018.
2. Bunch KJ, Allin B, Jolly M, Hardie T, Knight M. Developing a set of consensus indicators to support maternity service quality improvement: using Core Outcome Set methodology including a Delphi process. BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology. 2018;16:16.
3. Simms RA, Ping H, Yelland A, Beringer AJ, Fox R, Draycott TJ. Development of maternity dashboards across a UK health region; current practice, continuing problems. Eur J Obstet Gynecol Reprod Biol. 2013 Sep;170(1):119-24.
4. Hehir MP, Ananth CV, Siddiq Z, Flood K, Friedman AM, D'Alton ME. Cesarean delivery in the United States 2005 through 2014: a population-based analysis using the Robson 10-Group Classification System. American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology. 219(1):105.e1-.e11.
5. Robson MS. The 10-Group Classification System-a new way of thinking. American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology. 219(1):1-4.