



Title	Caesarean Section on Maternal Request – A Health Technology Assessment
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Aim

To contribute to the debate and provide input for decision making in relation to the future management of caesarean section on maternal request; to collate information and assess the benefits and risks of a planned caesarean section on maternal request in relation to a vaginal delivery.

Conclusions and results

The main conclusion of this report is that more should be done to ensure that a woman's first delivery is a positive experience. Most requests for caesarean section come from mothers who have had a bad experience in giving birth. Hence, the key point is to prevent requests for an elective caesarean by ensuring good first-time births. Another central point concerns the information given to pregnant women as a basis for their choice. Pregnant women requesting a caesarean section should be informed of the benefits and risks to themselves and to the child. They should also be informed about implications for later pregnancies and births and about the possibility to become pregnant again.

Recommendations

- Promote improvement in delivery, eg, by following the guidelines from the Danish National Board of Health.
- Attach importance to thorough and objective information given to expectant mothers.
- Attempt to persuade women to choose vaginal births. If a woman insists on caesarean section, she should be offered the procedure unless there is cause to do otherwise.

Methods

The ethical analysis is based on principles of ethics, legislation in the field, and knowledge provided by other analyses. The technological analysis is based on a systematic literature review and on registered data. The patient perspective is based on a systematic literature review.

The organizational analysis is based on qualitative case studies. The economic analysis is based on a study of the literature and data from the cost register of the National Board of Health.

Further research/reviews required

Further research is needed on: how to minimize injuries associated with vaginal delivery; the vaginal delivery process itself; the women who request caesarean sections; and the consequences of choosing caesarean, considering the possible risk for complications in subsequent pregnancies.