



Newsletter - December 2008

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the final newsletter for 2008! I am very pleased to report that preparations for the 2007 Annual Report are well underway and that key issues arising will be reported in future newsletters in the interim prior to final release of the 2007 Annual Report. I wish to sincerely thank members for their continued support and significant contributions to Council and its ongoing activities. On behalf of Council, I would also like to thank readers for their interest in and support of Council activities throughout 2008 and would like to take the opportunity to wish you and yours all a happy and safe Festive Season and the very best for the New Year.

A/Prof Peter Dargaville
Chairperson
Council of Obstetric & Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity

COUNCIL NEWS

Current membership in accordance with the Terms of Reference includes; A/Prof Peter Dargaville (Chair); Professor Allan Carmichael; Dr James Brodribb; Dr Geoff Shannon; Ms Ros Escott; Mr Peter Askey-Doran, Associate Professor Bipin Gupta, Mr Paul Mason; Dr David Strong & Mr Tony Sansom.

The Council website continues to archive newsletters, Annual Reports and other relevant resource information. The updated website address is as follows:

<http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/copmm>. Please note that *RHH Clinical Practice Guidelines and Protocols* can be accessed from the intranet link included in Council's website.

CLINICAL MATTERS

- 1. Child Death Review Committee update** - The Commissioner for Children reported that he would be representing COPMM at the forthcoming ANZ CDRT meeting to be held in Adelaide on December 1, 2008. A meeting has been scheduled to be held before Christmas which will include a broad range of key stakeholders including selected members of COPMM, Coroner's Office, the Commissioner for Children & DHHS to gain agreement on the development of a final model which would include *all* children.



2. The Commissioner for Children, Paul Mason reports from the ANZ CDRT that the following issues were discussed in addition to updates from the 7 participating bodies present:
 - National Classification and Reporting Framework. Victoria produced a template and list of data items agreed in principle by ANZ CDRT previously, but COAG has declined funding for a researcher to collate the different jurisdictions' systems as there are inconsistencies and anomalies, so further progress is halted. The discussion paper will be tabled at the next COPMM meeting and will be available for clinicians and researchers on request.
 - Using a Bayesian statistical approach to provide valid analysis of small numbers. Based on historical expectation and demographic risk profile by region it can be shown that some result is remarkable even though its extent may not be clearly understood. It is clear that the coordination of data across Australia and across the Tasman could increase the validity of identifying specific trends.
 - The Social Health Atlas run by Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU) at Adelaide University. Interactive maps can be found at www.publichealth.gov.au/interactive-mapping. Could be used to map child and other death data by statistical local area (SLA).
 - Classification of serious sub-fatal injury. A presentation by Prof James Harrison, Flinders University in collaboration with AIHW National Injury Surveillance Unit whose work can be viewed at www.nisu.flinders.edu.au. Discussion of value and meaning of "cause of death" on death certificates especially where there are multiple contributory factors, classification of babies delivered at 19 weeks or 350gm and how to assess signs of life, recording usual residence where parents live in Albury/Wodonga or Tweed Heads/Coolangatta, and other topics.
3. **Support for Statewide Community Paediatrician Position**- feedback has been received from the Government indicating that a business case to Treasury for ongoing funding had been formulated and a cross-sectoral meeting would be held as soon as possible to define this role and develop a Position Description.
4. **Electronic Perinatal Database**- The State budget for 2008-09 has an allocation of \$300,000 for the development of an Electronic Perinatal Database system. It has recently been advised that due to process and re-sourcing issues, progress has been delayed. As such, the original timeframe for implementation (~ 12 months) will inevitably be delayed. Watch this space for future updates.
5. **Update on future Processes involved in review of Paediatric Death Cases reported in Tasmania**- In response to the outcome of a recent review of a paediatric death case reported in Tasmania, current review processes have been considered and agreement has been reached to refine processes for some cases. For example, for some cases where an independent investigator had been requested by Council to compile a report to assist in the review process it may be useful for the report to be provided to relevant clinicians for review and reply to the Coroner before the final Coronial Finding is handed down. In summary, agreement has been reached that for some paediatric death cases it is important to:
 1. appoint an independent investigator (where possible);
 2. ensure that the report to the Coroner holds a covering letter recommending that the Coroner obtain the views of clinicians involved; and
 3. Develop policy guidelines for such future cases.



SUBCOMMITTEES

PAEDIATRIC Mortality & Morbidity

This subcommittee continues to meet bimonthly to review statewide paediatric deaths and progress actions as they arise despite the temporary leave of absence of some members during the latter part of this year. Dr David Strong was welcomed to this Committee as Paediatric representative while Dr Williams' continues to undertake leave of absence until January 2009. A Senior Child Protection Practice Consultant will undertake membership on this Committee upon confirmation of nominee. Dr Chris Lawrence continues to Chair this subcommittee. 2007 review of cases has been completed and 2008 cases are continuing to be reviewed.

PERINATAL Mortality & Morbidity

Review and classification of perinatal deaths (including stillbirths and neonatal deaths) have been entered for 2007 and review of classification of these deaths has commenced. Recommendations will be formulated in due course in view of cases reviewed.

MATERNAL Mortality & Morbidity

No maternal death cases have been reported in Tasmania since the case reviewed in 2006.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The current term for Council members is for a 3 year period (2006-2009). Renewal of Council membership will be progressed early in 2009.

MEETINGS FOR 2009

Next Council Meetings:

- Thursday 19 February, 12.30-2.00pm, venue tbc
- Thursday 21 May, 12.30-2.00pm, venue tbc
- Thursday 20 August, 12.30-2.00pm, venue tbc
- Thursday 19 November, 12.30-2.00pm, venue tbc

Note: Subcommittee meetings will be advised.

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