



RCM Clinical guidance briefing: Maternity bereavement care during Covid-19

Topic		
Bereavement Care in Maternity Services During Covid-19 Epidemic		
Potential impact of Covid-19 in this topic area		
<p>The tragedy of pregnancy loss will sadly continue through the pandemic and women and families will need access to high quality care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families may receive care from someone inexperienced in bereavement care provision • Families are isolated or distant from their wider networks of support such as family and friends • Access to services such as funerals may be prolonged due to resource and demand • Families may be anxious as to the cause of their loss • Access to peer support is limited or absent, for both Health Professionals and families 		
Current key guidance for this topic – clinical care and advice for women		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting parents and families can be stressful and demanding following a pregnancy loss or when a baby dies. These reasons will be individual and may include staff having to manage their own emotions following their own experience(s) of loss; a feeling of professional failure following a baby death and anxiety caused by wanting to ‘get it right’ knowing this is a difficult time for parents. • Pregnant women do not appear more likely to contract the infection than the general population. Pregnancy itself alters the body’s immune system and response to viral infections in general, which can occasionally be related to more severe symptoms and this will be the same for COVID-19. <p>With regard to vertical transmission (transmission from mother to baby antenatally or intrapartum), emerging evidence now suggests that vertical transmission is thought to be probable, although the proportion of pregnancies affected and the significance to the neonate has yet to be determined. Previous case reports from China suggested that there was no evidence for this and amniotic fluid, cord blood, neonatal throat swabs, placenta swabs, genital fluid and breastmilk samples from COVID-19 infected mothers have so far, all tested negative for the virus. A new report published on Thursday 26 March 2020 describes a single maternal-neonatal pair in which the infant born to a COVID-19 positive mother was found to have SARS-COV-2 IgM in serum at birth. Since IgM does not cross the placenta, this is likely to represent a neonatal immune response to in utero infection.</p> <p>https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/3824/2020-03-28-covid19-pregnancy-guidance.pdf</p>		
Current Evidence base		
Stage	Type	Link
Caring for women experiencing early loss	e-learning	http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/information/for-health-professionals/e-learning
Miscarriage association	webpage	https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/information/for-health-professionals/guidance-miscarriages-occur-home/

Miscarriage, Ectopic and Molar Pregnancy Resources	webpage	https://www.nbcpscotland.org.uk/miscarriage/training-and-support/ www.nbcpscotland.org.uk/miscarriage/resources
Marking loss, making memories	webpage/video	https://futurehealthandwellbeing.org/ritualrespect
After the loss: certificates, post mortem, cremation	download	https://www.bliss.org.uk/ https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2015)07.pdf https://www.sands.org.uk/ https://twinstrust.org/bereavement/support/resources.html
	video	Parent to Parent Post Mortem Authorisation
	video	Talking to parents about their decisions around burial or cremation after the death of their baby
	webpage	https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/information/for-health-professionals/certification/
	webpage	http://www.healthliteracyplace.org.uk/tools-and-techniques/techniques/teach-back
SANDS – National Bereavement Care Pathways	webpage	https://nbcpathway.org.uk/ https://www.nbcpscotland.org.uk/
NBCP	eLfh https://portal.e-lfh.or.uk	Bereavement care after pregnancy loss – learning for all Bereavement care after pregnancy loss – for health professionals Small wonders

References and links to online and virtual support and guidance

Title	Type	Link
ARC advice for professionals	Webpage	www.arc-uk.org/for-professionals
Bereavement following Pregnancy Loss and the Death of a Baby	e-learning	www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/maternalhealth/learning/bereavement-following-pregnancy.aspx
Sands advice for professionals	webpage	www.sands.org.uk/professionals
Ambulance crews	Video	https://youtu.be/iU1qtt09qho
Antenatal and postnatal mental health	webpage	https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/helping-parents-with-mental-health-issues
NICE guidance ante natal and postnatal mental health	webpage	https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs115
One chance to get it right: bereavement care	e-learning	https://www.ilearn.rcm.org.uk/enrol/index.php?id=583 (RCM members only)
Miscarriage Association advice for professionals	webpage	https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/information/for-health-professionals/
Tommy's	webpage	https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/about-us/tommys-midwife-alexa-and-google-home-app-pregnancy-questions

