

# Have We Lost Sight of the Women? An Observational Study About Normality-Centred Care in Australian Maternity Services.

Harsha Ananthram<sup>1</sup>, Venkat Vangaveti<sup>1</sup>, and Ajay Rane<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>James Cook University

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## Abstract

Objective \* Prioritising normal birth has led to harm in some instances in the UK \* Australian organisations have also promoted normal birth in maternity practice \* The negative impact of normal birth appears less well understood in Australia \* The study explores this impact of normal birth promotion and the quality of clinical incident investigations Design \* Survey-based research design Setting \* Online survey Population or Sample \* Australian maternity health care providers Methods \* Open and close-ended questions on the survey \* The survey received 1278 responses \* Data analysed using SPSS software Main Outcome Measures \* Perceptions on bias against or delay in interventions \* Perceptions on systemic attempts to reduce caesarean rates \* Perceptions on clinical incident investigations and the engagement of women in these processes Results \* Promoting normal birth may by introduce bias against or delay interventions \* Attempts to reduce caesarean section rates may reduce the agency of the woman to choose how she births \* Incident investigations appear to be independent and improve outcomes for mothers and babies \* Women with birth trauma appear to lack support and follow up postnatally Conclusions \* Current regulatory standards for maternity services may need to be re-evaluated \* Key performance indicators for maternity services need to change to reflect core ethical and legal obligations around informed consent

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