

August 2006
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Caesarean Birth Tripled Maternal Death Risk

Los Angeles, California (Reuters) ~ A Caesarean delivery more than triples a women's risk of dying in childbirth compared to a vaginal birth according to a new study from France.

The risk is still quite small, but many developed countries have seen a dramatic rise in the number of Cesarean performed each year **as *more women elect to avoid a vaginal delivery.** (The *Listening to Mothers 2004 Survey* refuted the idea that increased CS rate were the result of did "**women electing to have C-section in order avoid a vaginal delivery**", but **instead that medical caregivers had**

Researchers, led by Catherine Deneux-Tharaux of the Maternite Hospital Tenon in Paris, looked at 65 maternal deaths recorded in the French National Perinatal Survey from 1996 to 2000.

All of the deaths followed birth of a single child and were not due to conditions existing prior to delivery. The women had also not be *hospitalized during pregnancy (*editor's note -- hospitalization during pregnancy was used as a statistical marker for maternal or fetal disease, therefore a cohort of maternal death in in women who did not need any antepartum hospital care connotes the death of healthy women with a normal pregnancies).

The risk of death after childbirth was increased whether or not the Caesarean was performed before the onset of labor or during labor. The study was published in the September issue of *Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

Although rates of maternal death in most developed countries are relatively low -- US women have a *1 in 3,500 chance of pregnancy-related death -- the incidence of maternal mortality has not significantly decreased in the last two decades, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG).

(* Editor's note: Maternal mortality for vaginal birth is 1 out of 16,666 birth as compared to about 1 out of 5,000 for elective Cesarean section.)