

Introduction of carbon monoxide (CO) screening pilot for pregnant women

Aims

- » Implement NICE(2010) guidance on CO monitoring.
- » Increase number of referrals to smoking cessation services.
- » Offer health and wellbeing advice in pregnancy about smoking and its effects.
- » Train midwives on smoking cessation at level 1 so as to be able to offer CO monitoring and subsequent advice.
- » Ensure that data on smoking in pregnancy is captured accurately.

Rationale

Midwives have a public health responsibility within their role, and national stillbirth rates in England (4.7 per 1000 births) have been stagnant for some time.

Smoking in pregnancy is linked to an increased risk of pregnancy and neonatal complications such as abruption, placenta praevia, premature labour, perinatal mortality, intrauterine growth restriction, neonatal stress and irritability, hearing loss, and respiratory problems. It also affects fertility — both male and female.

Detection of smoking and referrals to smoking cessation services for pregnant women at Whittington Health was low. Smoking is the single most modifiable behaviour in pregnancy. As part of the public health agenda and NICE guidance, it was appropriate to offer CO screening for pregnant women.

Public health funds were sought to help with this project and Smokefree Alliance for Camden and Islington and Haringey Public Health both funded the pilot, which commenced in August 2015.

Development

In October 2014 a proposal with costings for a CO screening pilot was put to public health in Islington and Haringey. Resources requested included funding for CO monitors as well as training for midwives.

There was a keen interest to support the project, so several meetings were held across the public health agencies to define the project further and agree funding.

The final funding was for 38 CO monitors and two days per week for a project midwife to help monitor

the pilot. The funding was only for the initial set up-- not long term.

Training has been free, as the smoking cessation team delivering the training is part of Whittington Health ICO. Two hours of smoking cessation training is being delivered at midwifery study days on a rotational basis.

A pilot was the best option to start with, as our women are represented over two local boroughs (Islington and Haringey) and from other boroughs. The pilot is being offered within three midwifery teams that represent all the areas so that we have equity and can gather data that is relevant and accurate.

Midwives have been issued with CO monitors, guidance crib sheets and information sheets as well as training to ensure that they have the confidence to participate and provide relevant and accurate information to women. The project midwife is on hand to help with queries and to collate data on a weekly basis for numbers of women screened, CO levels recorded, numbers of women referred to smoking cessation services and collecting qualitative survey forms asking women about the CO screening process.

The evaluation data and questionnaire has been jointly agreed and designed by Islington Public Health.

The pilot will end in February 2016 and the final evaluation will then be analysed and published.