

Original

## **MATERNAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DELIVERIES BEFORE ARRIVAL TO HOSPITAL IN BISHA, SAUDI ARABIA**

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This is a case control retrospective study (unpaired design) carried out at Prince Abdulla Hospital in Bisha, Saudi Arabia on all 1800 newborn deliveries between January to December 1992. During this period 43 (2.4%) babies were born before arrival to hospital. This is 5 times the figures quoted for some western countries. Most of the deliveries occurred at night. There was no age or parity difference between the women who delivered before arrival and the control group. The conditions associated with high mortality among these women include retained placenta, shock, postpartum haemorrhage and acute inversion of the uterus. In conclusion, birth before arrival at hospital remains a significant problem in Bisha region of Saudi Arabia.

Babies born before arrival (BBA) to hospital suffer high mortality and morbidity<sup>1</sup>. Campbell, et al showed that the mortality rate of this group has reached 196.6/1000 births<sup>2</sup>. In some areas like Horan and El-Efairria in Bisha region of Saudi Arabia, the incidence of home deliveries reaches 63.8%<sup>3</sup>. This indicates that delivery outside hospital is still a major problem in this area. We studied the maternal characteristics in order to: (1) establish the prevalence of birth before arrival to hospital in our local population, (2) identify women at risk of giving birth before arrival and (3) identify the maternal mortality and morbidity related to giving birth before arrival.