

Protecting Public Health
Immunisation of babies at risk of tuberculosis**Date**

2003 - ongoing

LocationPrincess Royal Maternity
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Summary of project and achievements

TB is a re-emerging problem in the UK. BCG vaccination affords 70% protection against tuberculosis and the Department of Health recommends immunisation at birth for infants considered to be at higher risk (ref). In Glasgow in recent years neonatal immunisation has not, for various reasons, been widely practised in the maternity hospitals and problems within community clinics had led to a backlog of children waiting to be immunised.

Princess Royal Maternity, the largest of the three Glasgow maternity units serves one of the most socially deprived areas in the UK, with a large immigrant and asylum seeking population. In an effort to improve immunisation rates and optimise vaccine use, a monthly outpatient BCG clinic was set up within the hospital.

Problems which have been addressed include identification of infants at risk and communication with parents, particularly non-English speaking mothers, as well as the practical aspects of administration of vaccine.

Within four months of setting up the clinic, the number of identified infants at risk increased three fold. In the past 11 months we have identified 320 babies at risk (7% of deliveries). 294 of these babies were immunised in the hospital clinic and a further five are known to have been immunised in community clinics (total immunisation rate 93.4%). In the preceding year only 5 babies were immunised prior to discharge from hospital and community immunisation rates in the city (under an active catch up campaign) were 60%.

Provision of BCG vaccination within a familiar and local hospital setting achieves high rates of attendance and, with the support of Public Health services, can easily be implemented with existing resources.

Reference

Immunisation against Infectious Disease, DOH; 1996.