

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

HSS(MD) 37/2008

To:
Chief Executives of HSS Boards
Chief Executives of HSC Trusts
Medical Directors in HSC Trusts for cascade to:
 Consultant Obstetricians
 Clinical Directors of Radiology
Directors of Public Health HSS Boards
Directors of Nursing HSS Boards
Directors of Nursing HSC Trusts for cascade to:
 All Midwives

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Your Ref:
Our Ref: HSS(MD) 37/2008
Date: 30 October 2008

Dear Colleagues

Summary

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the Regional Obstetric Ultrasound Survey Report, October 2008 is now available at: www.gain-ni.org. The Report provides a detailed baseline of the provision of obstetric ultrasound services in Northern Ireland. It also contains a number of recommendations for routine obstetric ultrasound screening within maternity services.

Background

In 2002 in England and 2004 in Wales obstetric ultrasound surveys were undertaken with the aim of mapping current routine antenatal ultrasound provision across both countries. These baseline surveys were very relevant and informed the work of the National Screening Committee (NSC) in the development of standards for the Fetal Anomaly Screening Programme (FASP).

Regional Obstetric Ultrasound Survey

At the Northern Ireland Special Advisory Committee of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (SAC O&G) in February 2006 it was agreed to undertake a similar ultrasound survey in Northern Ireland. In 2006 a regional survey was carried out by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) to assess the provision of routine antenatal ultrasound services by the maternity units in Northern Ireland. The report of the regional ultrasound survey can be accessed via www.gain-ni.org. It contains a number of recommendations for routine obstetric ultrasound screening. The attention of the Health and Social Services Boards and Health and Social Care Trusts is drawn to the findings and recommendations.



Action

Boards and Trusts should consider the recommendations in the Survey Report in relation to the routine obstetric ultrasound screening commissioned or provided by them. Your attention is also drawn to the NICE Antenatal Care Guidelines 2008 (available at www.nice.org.uk/guidelines).

For further information please contact:

Dr Margaret Boyle, senior medical officer, Margaret.boyle2@dhsspsni.gov.uk or
Ms Jackie McGeagh, regional antenatal and newborn screening coordinator
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Yours sincerely



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Chief Medical Officer

cc: Dr Jim Livingstone, Director of Safety, Quality & Standards Directorate, DHSSPS
Ms Nicola Porter, Guidelines & Audit Manager, DHSSPS
Professor Patrick Johnston, Dean & Head of School, Medicine & Dentistry, QUB
Dr Terry McMurray, Chief Executive, NIMDTA
Professor Linda Johnston, Head of School, Nursing & Midwifery, QUB
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Gill Hodges, Society of Radiography
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This letter is available at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk and also on the DHSSPS Extranet which can be accessed directly at <http://extranet.dhsspsni.gov.uk> or by going through the HPSS Web at <http://www.n-i.nhs.uk> and clicking on DHSSPS.