

# Travel time and Distance to the Birth Unit and Outcomes- A Retrospective Audit For Women Presenting in Spontaneous Labour Followed By Vaginal Birth

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## Introduction

Regional and remote maternity units are often required to provide services across a large geographical area. Traveling requirements to and from hospital across a long distance may deter patients from presenting for obstetric services and may be associated with a higher incidence of births before arrival (BBA).

## Method

A retrospective audit was conducted in maternity patients who had vaginal births following presentation for spontaneous labour between June and December 2023.

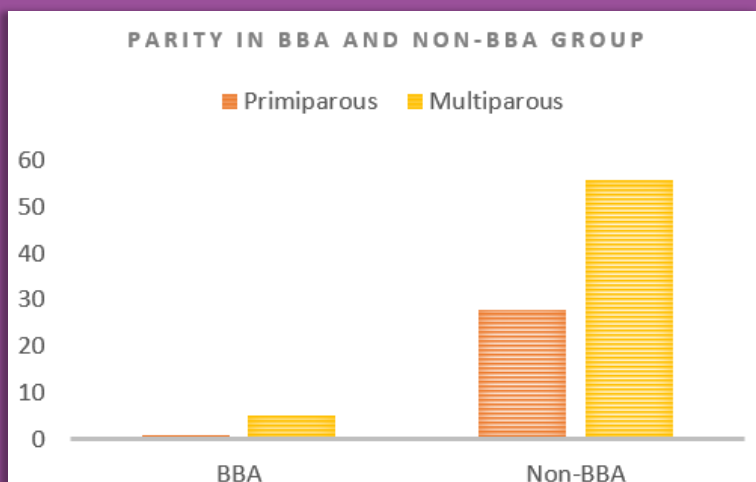
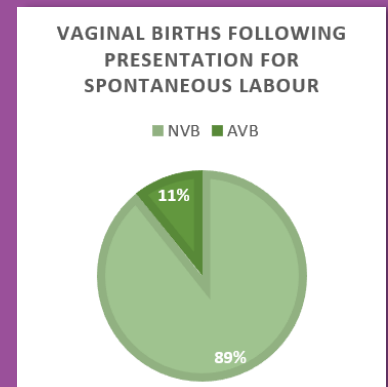
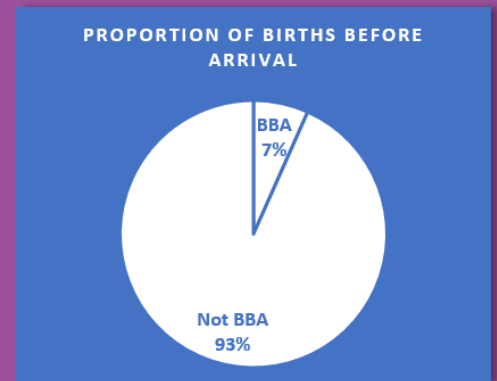
Information including birth outcomes, home address, lengths of labour were obtained from the Electronic Medical Record software.

## Aims

To examine the traveling requirements of our maternity clients in terms of distance and estimated travel time by car and identify the relationship between long distances or travel time and relevant outcomes including mode of delivery, incidence of births before arrival, and the likelihood of prolonged labour outside of hospital.

## Results

- There were 90 vaginal deliveries resulting from spontaneous labour; 6 of these were BBAs and 84 were not
- The majority lived within 30 minutes of the hospital (72%) while 7.78% of patients required more than 60 minutes to travel from home
- The average distance from home in the BBA group was 22.9km compared to 24.0km for its counterpart
- The average travel time from home in the BBA group was 22.8 mins compared to 23.5 mins for its counterpart
- The average time from admission to birth in the non-BBA group was 6 hours 47 minutes



## Discussion and conclusions

The results demonstrate that longer distances or travel times do not have a significant impact on the incidence of births before arrival and unmonitored labours in this maternity unit. This reflects adequate antenatal education and general awareness among our antenatal cohort.