

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

QUALITY STANDARDS PROGRAMME

Quality standard topic: Caesarean section

Output: Equality analysis form – Topic Expert Group 3

Introduction

As outlined in the [Quality Standards Programme interim process guide](#) (available from www.nice.org.uk), NICE has a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people from different groups. The purpose of this form is to document the consideration of equality issues in each stage of the development process before reaching the final output that will be approved by the NICE Guidance Executive. This equality analysis is designed to support compliance with NICE's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.

Table 1 lists the equality characteristics and other equality factors NICE needs to consider, i.e. not just population groups sharing the 'protected characteristics' defined in the Equality Act but also those affected by health inequalities associated with socioeconomic factors or other forms of disadvantage. The table does not attempt to provide further interpretation of the protected characteristics. This is because it is likely to be simpler, and more efficient, to use the evidence underpinning the quality standard to define population groups within the broad protected characteristic categories rather than to start with possibly unsuitable checklists created for other purposes, such as social surveys or HR monitoring tools.

The form should be used to:

- confirm that equality issues have been considered and identify any relevant to the topic
- ensure that the quality standards outputs do not discriminate against any of the equality groups
- highlight planned action relevant to equality
- highlight areas where quality standards may advance equality of opportunity.

This form is completed by the NICE quality standards internal team at each stage within the development process:

- Topic Expert Group meeting one - Scoping

- Topic Expert Group meeting two – creation of draft quality standard
- Topic Expert Group meeting three – creation of final quality standard.

Table 1

Protected characteristics
Age
Disability
Gender reassignment
Pregnancy and maternity
Race
Religion or belief
Sex
Sexual orientation
Other characteristics
<p>Socio-economic status</p> <p>Depending on policy or other context, this may cover factors such as social exclusion and deprivation associated with geographical areas or inequalities or variations associated with other geographical distinctions (e.g. the North/South divide, urban versus rural).</p>
<p>Other categories</p> <p>Other groups in the population experience poor health because of circumstances often affected by, but going beyond, sharing a protected characteristic or socioeconomic status. Whether such groups are identifiable depends on the guidance topic and the evidence. The following are examples of groups covered in NICE guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees and asylum seekers • Migrant workers • Looked after children • Homeless people.

Quality standards equality analysis

Stage: Topic Expert Group one

Topic: Caesarean section

1. Have any equality issues impacting upon equality groups been identified during this stage of the development process?

- Please state briefly any relevant equality issues identified and the plans to tackle them during development.

Whether a woman requires / requests to have a caesarean section depends on a number of different factors, none of which should be based on whether any of the protected characteristics relate to them. However, the TEG did recognise that there are certain equalities groups that may be less likely to access all the available ante-natal care, which can correlate with an increased rate of complications in birth and decrease in access to information to help inform choice. The TEG have identified this as an issue and have considered any potential adjustments required to ensure equality of access to services

2. Have relevant bodies and stakeholders been consulted, including those with a specific interest in equalities?

- Have comments highlighting potential for discrimination or advancing equality been considered?

To gain multiple perspectives from professionals and lay members with experience of caesarean section, representation within the Topic Expert Group was sought from a variety of audiences including lay members, a consultant obstetric anaesthetist, a consultant obstetrician, a head of midwifery services, a consultant midwife and two consultant obstetrician and gynaecologists.

3. Have any population groups, treatments or settings been excluded from coverage by the quality standard at this stage in the process? Are these exclusions legal and justified?

- Are the reasons for justifying any exclusion legitimate?

The TEG identified that birth partners are not referred to in the guidance and will therefore not be included in the quality standard. Whilst this group may have some needs relating to this topic, they are excluded due to a lack of evidence in the source guideline concerning what their needs are and how best to meet them.

4. If applicable, do any of the quality statements make it impossible or unreasonably difficult in practice for a specific group to access a service or element of a service?

- Does access to a service or element of a service depend on membership of a specific group?
- Does a service or element of the service discriminate unlawfully against a

group?

- Do people with disabilities find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to receive a service or element of a service?

The TEG recognized that a number of the statements were concerned with verbal and written communication between health care professionals and the women and her family. The TEG have made specific reference in the equality considerations for the statements that reasonable adjustments will need to be made to ensure all people are able to fully understand the information being presented to them and that they are able to make fully informed choices about their care.

5. If applicable, does the quality standard advance equality?

- Please state if the quality standard, including statements, measures and indicators, as described will advance equality of opportunity, for example by making access more likely for certain groups, by tailoring the service to certain groups, or by making reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities?

A positive impact is expected. We believe these statements promote equality.