

An 'Epidemic' of Ectopic pregnancy in West Hertfordshire? Fifteen years experience in a District General Hospital.

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BACKGROUND: Our clinical impression is that the incidence of ectopic pregnancy in West Hertfordshire has been steadily rising to almost 'epidemic' proportions. On the basis of our clinical suspicion, a retrospective study was performed looking at the ectopic pregnancy rates in the region from 1993 to 2007. **METHODS:** All histologically proven ectopic pregnancies were obtained using the hospital histology database and all deliveries (livebirths and stillbirths) were obtained using the Ciconia Maternity information System (CMiS). The numbers of legal terminations of pregnancy (NHS and non NHS) as well as women of reproductive age were obtained using the databases from the Office for National Statistics and Department of Health.

RESULTS: In terms of absolute numbers of histologically proven ectopic pregnancies, there were 38 cases in 1993, rising to a peak of 68 cases in 1998 and 59 cases in 2007. With respect to the various denominators used in calculating the incidence of ectopic pregnancy, there has not been a significant rise in rates of ectopic pregnancy.

CONCLUSIONS: Although there has been the occasional sharp increase in ectopic pregnancy rates over 15 years, overall the incidence of ectopic pregnancy has remained fairly stable. There is no evidence of a dramatic rise in ectopic pregnancy rates in West Hertfordshire over a 15 year period.