

Release date - immediate

Attention: News desk and Health Correspondents

PRESS RELEASE (1 of 4 pages)

Maternity charity offers information resources as a solution to 'confused' pregnant women and new mothers

In response to a recent survey which identified the difficulties women have in obtaining information and consistent advice about their health during pregnancy, UK based maternity information charity, MIDIRS, presents its *Informed Choice* resource as a solution to these latest findings.

The survey of 1,300 women, carried out by the baby charity Tommy's and Johnson's Baby, revealed that almost half of the women asked said they received conflicting information about their pregnancy that left them unclear what they should and should not do. Questions ranged from 'What is safe to eat during pregnancy?' to 'Is it safe to dye your hair?' Embarrassment about asking for advice was also stated as being a common problem amongst expectant women.

MIDIRS *Informed Choice* has long been championed as an essential resource, not only for the pregnant woman, new mothers and their families, but for the health care professional and those training to become midwives. A comprehensive portfolio of 25 titles, which focus on a wide range of topics surrounding pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period, *Informed Choice* is heralded as being the most concise information resource of evidence-based information available in the UK. A strong statement considering the wealth of information that is presented to women through their midwife, family and friends, yet one that is supported by leading academicians in the maternity profession.

Informed Choice is not only a concise information resource of evidence-based information, but the text also explores issues around decision making where the

evidence base is weak but where women still need to know their options, just as Health Editor, Jeremy Laurance, highlighted in his article about the conflicting information about pregnancy, which featured in a recent Life-Style section of the *Independent* newspaper (*Laurance 2008).

Dr Sally Marchant, MIDIRS Editor and Research Midwife said 'MIDIRS recognises that health care professionals and women need access to a wide range of information before, during and after pregnancy. Midwives and other health care professionals, as well as organisations interested in maternal and child health all have a role to play in ensuring women receive this information in a way that is appropriate to their individual needs. The *Informed Choice* initiative gathers together information from a wide range of resources and is designed to help the busy health care professional offer women access to accurate and relevant information, as well as empowering women to ask questions and make decisions about their own health care needs throughout pregnancy and into parenthood'.

The biennial review of all 25 titles in the MIDIRS *Informed Choice* resource, including four new topics, has just been completed. Hard copies of both versions (women's and professionals') will soon be available. Electronic downloads of all 25 sections of the professional titles can be purchased for £14.95. Visit www.infochoice.org for details.

##Ends##

Reference

*Laurance J (2008). In the dark: what pregnant women should know – but don't. *The Independent*, Tuesday 2nd September 2008.

For further information contact: Sue Penn on 0117 9077594 or e-mail spenn@midirs.org.

Notes for editors:

1. **MIDIRS** (www.midirs.org) is a Bristol based not-for-profit organisation offering a complete information service to all health professionals, non-statutory agencies or anyone involved in the care of women and their babies during and after pregnancy. Its organisational mission is *'to be the leading international information resource relating to childbirth and infancy, disseminating this information as widely as possible to assist in the improvement of maternity care'*. Over 32,870 customers worldwide trust MIDIRS services to support their education, practice and professional development. Through a continuing commitment to information access, MIDIRS aims to help health professionals provide mothers and babies with the best possible care.
2. **MIDIRS *Informed Choice*** is a comprehensive set of 25 titles which examine key decisions facing expectant mothers during pregnancy. There are two versions for each topic, one for pregnant women and one for health professionals. The women's leaflets are designed to assist them in making informed choices, by providing the facts to help them make decisions that are right for them in their pregnancy. The professional sections aim to provide midwives with sound evidence upon which to base their practice.
3. **Tommy's [Let's talk baby]** From September 2008, Tommy's, the baby charity will be known as Tommy's [Let's talk baby]. At Tommy's we believe it is unacceptable that one in four women loses a baby every year. We want to give every baby the best chance of being born healthy, so we work to fund medical research into the causes of premature birth, stillbirth and miscarriage, and provide a free information service that educates all parents-to-be about health in pregnancy. Our information service is informed by our medical research and includes a telephone midwife service, a comprehensive website and free books and leaflets promoting health in pregnancy. By 2020 we want to halve the number of babies who die during pregnancy or birth. Anyone wanting to speak directly to a midwife can call Tommy's Information Line on 0870 777 30 60 or

visit www.tommys.org for pregnancy health information. Alternatively, email midwife@tommys.org. Free books and leaflets are also available.

4. **Johnson's Baby** With over 100 years of baby care expertise, Johnson's Baby understands the craving pregnant women have for knowledge and information. Johnson's Baby is delighted to support Tommy's again this year.