

Chapter Qualitative Study

Participant information leaflet: Women affected by tears and cuts during childbirth

What is this study?

- Exploring the views and experiences of women affected by tears and cuts during childbirth and the healthcare professionals who care for them (the **Chapter qualitative sub-study**).
- *This study forms part of a larger programme of research called **Optimising the care of women following childbirth related perineal trauma (the Chapter study)**. You can find out more information about the Chapter Study via this website or using the QR code: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/applied-health/research/chapter-study.aspx>*



Why should I get involved in this study?

Why are tears and/or cuts in childbirth such a problem?

- More than 80% of women experience cuts and/or tears during vaginal childbirth in the UK each year. That's about 450,000 women - it's a big problem.
- When giving birth vaginally, women can experience tears and cuts to the muscles and skin around the bladder, vagina perineum (the skin between the vagina and back passage) and the anal sphincter.

Why is this study important?

- All types of tears can result in pain and distress for women, and where there are problems, they need to be treated quickly and effectively.
- If tears are not treated properly, women can be left with physical and mental health problems.
- At the moment, we don't have a standardised care process (tool) to help doctors, midwives and nurses to manage cuts and tears after childbirth if there are problems.
- It's really important that we develop a tool to make sure that women affected by cuts and tears during childbirth are getting the best care.
- The information that we collect as part of this study, will be used to inform the development of a tool and guidance, and will hopefully improve care for women in the future.

Why have I been invited to take part?

- You have been invited because you identify as a woman, are over the age of 18, living in the UK who has experienced cuts and/or tears during childbirth within the last 12 months.

What will I have to do to take part?

- There are two options for taking part. You can choose to take part in either a one-to-one discussion (interview) or in a group discussion with other women affected by tears and cuts during childbirth (discussion group).
- Some women may prefer to keep their experiences private, and some may welcome the opportunity to share their thoughts in a group. You can choose which is the best option for you – we're only asking you to do one and not both.
- Discussions will be led by members of the Chapter research team who are experienced in talking about women's experiences of childbirth.
- The table below provides you with important information about what taking part will involve for each of the two options: interview or discussion group.

Interview Option	Discussion Group Option
Who: you and a researcher (and an interpreter if needed)	Who: you, a small number of other women affected by cuts and tears in childbirth and members of the research team (and an interpreter if needed)
Where: at a time and location of your choice (e.g., online, in your home, in a community centre where you attend mother and baby groups, public location, University of Birmingham or Warwick)	Where: at a time and location that best suits the needs of those attending (e.g., online, community centres running mother and baby groups, University of Birmingham or Warwick, public location etc.)
How: phone, WhatsApp, Zoom, Teams, face to face	How: Zoom, Teams, face to face
When: date/time that suits you	When: date/time that suits as many women within the group as possible
How long will it take: about an hour	How long will it take: between 1.5 and 2 hours
Recording: the discussion will be audio/video recorded with your permission. This recording will be used to make a written record of what was discussed.	Recording: the group discussion will be audio/video recorded with everyone's permission. This recording will be used to make a written record of what was discussed.
Interpreter support available: yes	Interpreter support available: yes
Consent: yes – you will be asked to give consent to take part. You can do this in writing, electronically, or verbally.	Consent: yes – you will be asked to give consent to take part. You can do this in writing, electronically, or verbally.

Other information: yes – you will be asked to complete a short background questionnaire to tell us a bit more about you (e.g., your age and ethnicity)	Other information: yes – all the women taking part will be asked to complete a short background questionnaire to tell us a bit more about them (e.g., age and ethnicity)
What will we talk about: your experiences of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cuts and tears during childbirth • care in relation to your cuts and tears following childbirth • what is important to you about how women affected by cuts and tears during childbirth are cared for • what might be important questions within the tool that doctors and midwives will use to help care for women affected by cuts and tears. 	What will we talk about: your experiences of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cuts and tears during childbirth • care in relation to your cuts and tears following childbirth • what is important to you about how women affected by cuts and tears during childbirth are cared for • what might be important questions within the tool that doctors and midwives will use to help care for women affected by cuts and tears.
Expenses and gratitude payments: £25 shopping voucher. If you travel to take part, we will cover reasonable expenses. Please talk to the team if you need further support, for example childcare costs.	Expenses and gratitude payments: £40 shopping voucher. If you travel to take part, we will cover reasonable expenses. Please talk to the team if you need further support, for example childcare costs.
Opportunity to take part in further Chapter research after the interview: yes	Opportunity to take part in further Chapter research after the discussion group: yes

What happens next?

- If you decide to take part, you can talk to the person who gave you this information leaflet or you can contact the research team using our contact details at the end of this leaflet.
- If you found out about the research from social media and contacted the research team directly, then you don't need to do anything else as the research team already have your contact details and will be in touch again.
- The research team will also ask you to complete a short background questionnaire, so we know a bit more about you (e.g., your age, ethnicity).
- We will then find a suitable time and place for the interview/or tell you when and where the discussion groups are running.
- Before the interview/discussion group, we will ask for your consent including permission to audio record the interview/discussion group. This recording will be used to make a written record of what was discussed. Unfortunately, if you are not happy for your interview or the discussion group to be recorded, you won't be able to take part.

What are the benefits of taking part?

- You may benefit from sharing your experiences and what you tell us may help us to improve care for women affected by tears and cuts during childbirth.

- People who take part in an interview will be offered a £25 shopping voucher and those who take part in a discussion group will be offered a £40 shopping voucher each as a thank you for your time. The discussion groups take longer and so this is why those participants receive more.
- If you take part in a face-to-face interview or discussion group, then we will cover any reasonable travel expenses based on standardised public transport/milage calculations.
- Should you require further support to participate, for example, expenses to cover childcare, please discuss this with the research team.

What are the risks of taking part?

- There are no physical risks to taking part in this study. However, conversations in the interview/discussion group may be upsetting as they may relate to your personal experiences.
- If this happens, we will ask you if you want to stop and have a short break, or if you want to stop completely.
- At the end of this leaflet, you will find contact details of specialised organisations/professionals who can offer more support if you feel you need it.

Do I have to take part?

- No. Taking part in this study is voluntary. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete a consent form. However, you will be free to withdraw at any time without giving us a reason.
- If you decide to withdraw within two weeks of your interview/discussion group, then we will securely destroy your data wherever possible.
- If you withdraw more than two weeks after the interview/discussion group, then we will continue to use your anonymised data as it will have been included in our ongoing analysis by that point.
- If you wish to withdraw, please contact the Chapter qualitative team using the information provided below.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

- All the information collected as part of this study will be handled strictly in accordance with your consent, the Data Protection Act 2018 as part of the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Very occasionally, interviews/discussions bring to light information about a participant that could affect their welfare or the welfare of others. If this happens during your interview/discussion group, then the researcher may need to disclose this information to the

relevant authority/agency. Certain welfare concerns may override concerns about confidentiality. Where possible, the researcher will talk to you about this.

- If you take part in a focus group, the researcher will remind all participants at the start of the session that what is discussed within the focus group is to remain confidential and is not to be shared with people outside of the group.

What will happen to any information that I give?

- The audio/video recording of the interviews and discussion groups will be transcribed (this means to create a written record) by a specialist transcription company who will sign an agreement to keep your data confidential and stored securely.
- We will analyse the transcripts as part of our research. If your participation is supported by an interpreter, then the interpretation company will also sign an agreement. Where language interpreters are used, only the English parts of the recording will be transcribed.

Will my healthcare support team (GP, midwife etc.) know that I am participating?

- No, we will not inform your GP or any other health professionals that you are taking part in this study.

What will happen to the results of the study?

- The results of this study will be used to inform the development of a tool to help doctors, midwives and nurses to manage cuts and tears after childbirth and to make sure that women are getting the best care.
- The results may be published in academic journals, presented at conferences, and used to inform policy and practice.
- Please note that you will not be identifiable in any study related report.
- Results will be made available on the Chapter website – please scan the QR code or use the web address available at the end of this leaflet.
- Alternatively, you can email or call the team (whose contact details are at the end of this leaflet) to indicate you would like to be sent a summary of results once they are available.

Who has funded and reviewed the research?

- This study has been funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (Grant reference: NIHR202869). It is organised managed and coordinated by the University of

Birmingham where data will be securely stored. The study has been reviewed by the University of Birmingham Central Ethics Committee.

What if there is a problem?

- If you are not satisfied with the way you have been approached or treated during this study, please speak to the researcher(s) first. Our contact details can be found below.
- You can also contact the lead researcher for the Chapter study, Professor Katie Morris (r.k.morris@bham.ac.uk)
- If you wish to complain formally, you can contact the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Manager, Sue Cottam (s.l.cottam@bham.ac.uk)

Where can I get further support?

- Taking part in this study may be upsetting as you reflect on your experience of having a cut or tear. Below is a list of specialist professionals/organisations that can help support including emotional and physical support.

Name of Organisation	Website
MASIC	https://masic.org.uk/
Birth trauma association	https://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/
Make birth better	https://www.makebirthbetter.org/
NCT parents in mind	https://www.nct.org.uk/
Maternal mental health alliance	https://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/

Research team contact details

Lead Chapter Qualitative Researchers: Dr Laura Jones and Dr Sarah Hillman

Email us chapterqualstudy@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Call Laura on 0121 414 3024

Follow us on Twitter @Chapter_Study

Visit the Chapter study website: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/applied-health/research/chapter-study.aspx>



Thank you for taking time to read this information leaflet and for considering taking part in the Chapter qualitative sub-study