



Media Release

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No decrease in Australian stillbirth rate

Australian and New Zealand Stillbirth Alliance (ANZSA) researchers, care providers and parents have called for action after an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Report released this week stated that stillbirth rates have not decreased in the last year.

The *AIHW Australia's mothers and babies 2008* report stated that for every 1,000 births in 2008, 7.4 resulted in stillbirth - a total of 2,188 families who did not get to take their baby home with them. This is in fact an increase from the 2,177 stillbirths reported in 2007.

The report also stated that the stillbirth rate of babies born to Indigenous women is in excess of the rate of stillbirth for non-Indigenous women – 11.2 per 1,000 births for Indigenous women as opposed to 7.0 per 1,000 births for non-Indigenous women.

Unexplained stillbirth continues to make up over one-third of stillbirths at term gestation, meaning many families return home without an explanation for why their baby died.

ANZSA Chair, Dr Adrian Charles says, 'Not only does this report highlight the disproportionate stillbirth rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and the need to close the gap but it also shows the importance of thorough investigations to explain these unexplained stillbirths'.

'ANZSA is continuing its efforts to improve the investigations of stillbirth as many of these unexplained stillbirths are simply underinvestigated,' he says.

ANZSA Secretary, A/Prof Vicki Flenady says, 'ANZSA hopes that through national education programs for midwives and obstetricians held throughout the year, we will see improvements in the quality of information about stillbirth'.

ANZSA believes there are many approaches to reduce the stillbirth rate including clinical practice improvement through the development of high quality guidelines and education of these into practice, funding to conduct high quality research as well as gaining support from national, state and territory health departments in the creation of public awareness campaigns aimed at informing clinicians and the public about modifiable risk factors.

To access this report please visit the AIHW website at

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/11813m>

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