

Spring 4-2015

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## Recommended Citation

McGuirk, Kristina; Steevens, Savannah; Robinson, Megan; and Lasanen, Andra, "The Safety of Planned Home Births Attended by Certified Nurse Midwives as Defined by Neonatal Mortality" (2015). *Senior Nursing Poster Presentations 2015*. Book 3.  
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The Safety of Planned Home Births Attended by Certified Nurse Midwives as Defined by  
Neonatal Mortality

Kristina McGuirk, Savannah Steevens, Megan Robinson, Andra Lasanen

Abstract

The safety of planned home births is an ongoing debate in the United States. This controversy stems from conflicting data found in a limited number of studies. Hutton, Reltsma, and Kaufman (2009), found that there is no significant difference between perinatal and neonatal mortality in the home as compared to hospital births. However, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) report that planned home births have a two-fold increase in neonatal death (Women's Healthcare Physicians, 2013). The American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM), the American Public Health Association (APHA), and the World Health Organization (WHO) state that planned home births are safe, as long as the patient falls under certain criteria, such as a low-risk pregnancy, singleton, cephalic fetus at term, and the absence of pre-existing conditions (Declerq and Stotland, 2015). The purpose of this review is to examine the literature related to the safety of planned home births attended by certified nurse midwives as measured by infant mortality rates.

Key words: birth outcomes, home births, CNM, midwifery, perinatal outcomes, infant mortality, safety, and low risk births.

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