Abstract

Anonymous birth law saves babies-optimization, sustainability and public awareness.

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Abstract

The aims of this study are to assess the impact of Austria's anonymous birth law from the time relevant statistical records are available and to evaluate the use of hatches versus anonymous hospital delivery. This study is a complete census of police-reported neonaticides (1975-2012) as well as anonymous births including baby hatches in Austria during 2002-2012. The time trends of neonaticide rates, anonymous births and baby hatches were analysed by means of Poisson and logistic regression model. Predicted and observed rates were derived and compared using a Bayesian Poisson regression model. Predicted numbers of neonaticides for the period of the active awareness campaign, 2002-2004, were more than three times larger than the observed number (p = 0.0067). Of the 365 women who benefitted from this legislation, only 11.5 % chose to put their babies in a baby hatch. Since the law was introduced, a significant decreasing tendency of numbers of anonymous births (p = 047) was observed, while there was significant increase of neonaticide rates (p = 0.0001). The implementation of the anonymous delivery law is associated with a decrease in the number of police-reported neonaticides. The subsequent significantly decreasing numbers of anonymous births with an accompanying increase of neonaticides represents additional evidence for the effectiveness of the measure.

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