



Helping develop guidance on Caesarean section in Turkey

In late 2009 NICE International began working with the Turkish Ministry of Health to develop a clinical guideline on Caesarean section. The guideline focuses on elective Caesareans on maternal request, where mothers with normal healthy pregnancies choose to deliver their babies at term by Caesarean section, instead of giving birth vaginally.

Turkey was keen to develop the guideline because in parts of the country the Caesarean birth rate is much higher than the World Health Organisation's 15% recommended upper limit threshold.

Additionally, the Turkish Ministry of Health is building its capacity to develop clinical guidelines in general, as part of the country's health reforms. Working with NICE on the Caesarean guideline provided an opportunity for the Ministry to develop and refine new guidance-producing processes aimed at setting national standards for high quality care, improving cost effectiveness and increasing access to healthcare.

NICE International's work in Turkey began with the delivery of an intensive short training course on health economics and systematic review for Ministry of Health technical staff. The NICE team then provided hands-on support to the Ministry to recruit and run a local guideline development group consisting of obstetricians, paediatricians, primary care practitioners, midwives and women who would be affected by the guidance.

Francoise Cluzeau, NICE International project lead, explains: "Our aim was to export NICE's tried-and-tested methods of developing high quality clinical guidelines and to support the Turkish Ministry of Health to adopt and adapt these processes where necessary to embed evidence-based decision making in their healthcare system." NICE International also provided the Ministry of Health with hands-on support with reporting and presenting data to the guideline development group, and provided a UK clinical advisor to peer review the final guideline prior to publication, alongside Turkish academics and health economists.



The guideline was published in January 2011. It contains recommendations for women having their first baby, and for women having second pregnancies. The recommendations for healthcare professionals within the guideline will focus on supporting women to make an informed choice about giving birth, and explaining all the risks of both Caesarean section and vaginal delivery, taking into account every mother's particular medical history.