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Abusive, inappropriate, and inconsiderate behaviour in obstetric care in France.

A cohort study in 25 French maternity units.

Laurent GAUCHER, Cyril HUISSOUD, René ECOCHARD, René-Charles RUDIGOZ, Marion CORTET, Laetitia BOUVERET, Sandrine TOUZET, Cyrille COLIN, Pascal GAUCHERAND, Corinne DUPONT.

Introduction

In 2018, abuse and disrespect during childbirth care became the object of media attention, labelled as "**obstetric violence**" in European countries. Among all dimensions of abuse and disrespect behaviour during care, we distinguish inappropriate behaviour (e.g. inappropriate attitudes or words) from inconsiderate behaviour (e.g. inadequate or no information). The objective of this study was to quantify in the general population the proportion of women reporting this behaviours during their delivery within the Aurore perinatal network of facilities. We will then explore each woman's ability to report these inappropriate or inconsiderate behaviours, over time and according to her intrinsic characteristics.

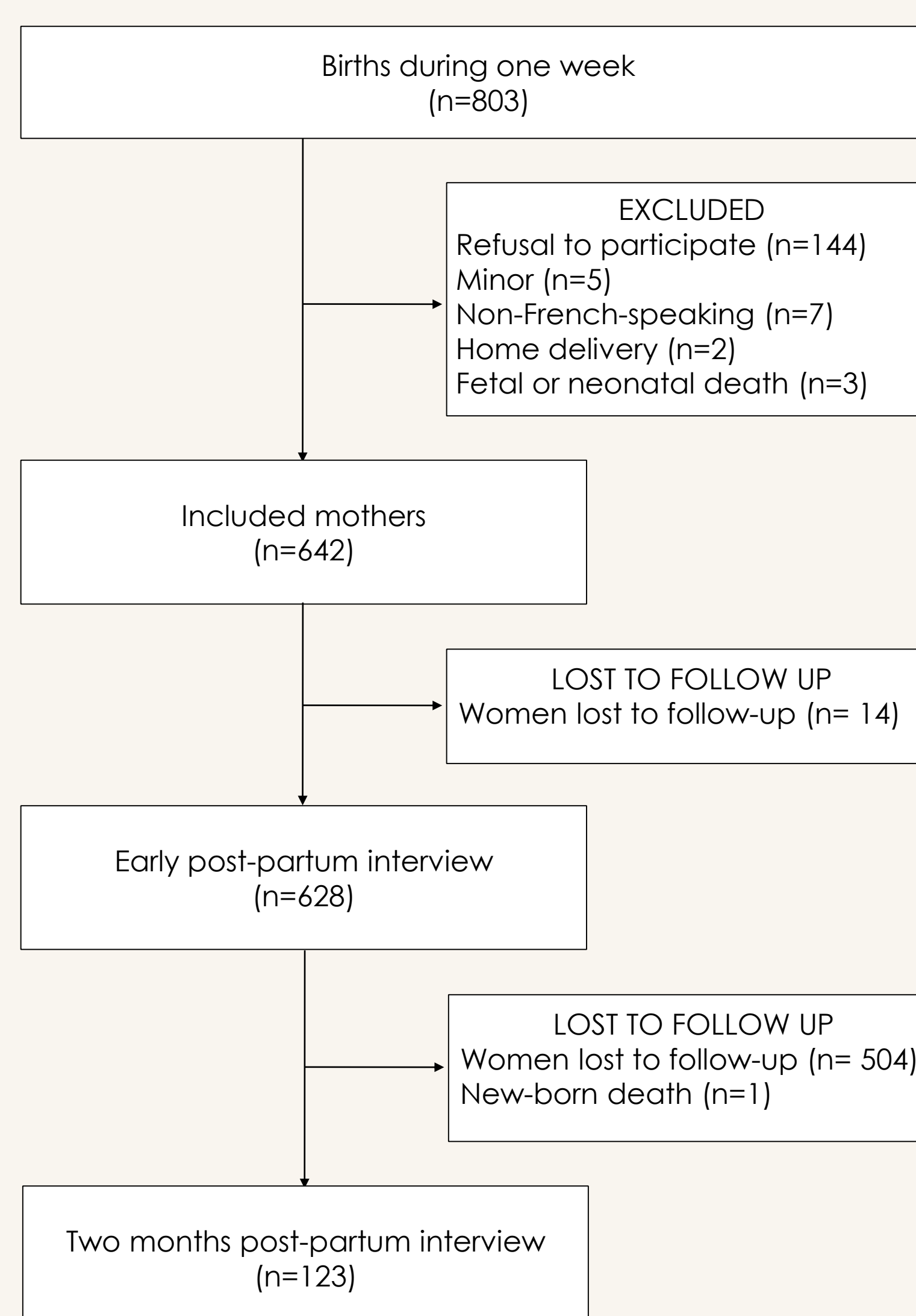
Material and methods

Design: Prospective multicentre cohort study by self-administered questionnaire in the week after childbirth and again two months afterwards.

Setting: 25 French maternity units in a contiguous geographic region, with around 43 000 births per year.

Participants: The study included 642 French-speaking adult women who gave birth to a live born child. We estimated the inclusion period at one week.

Primary and secondary outcome measures: The primary outcome measure was the proportion of women reporting one or more inappropriate behaviours by healthcare professionals during childbirth, and the secondary outcome measure the proportion reporting inconsiderate behaviour during childbirth.



Results (1)

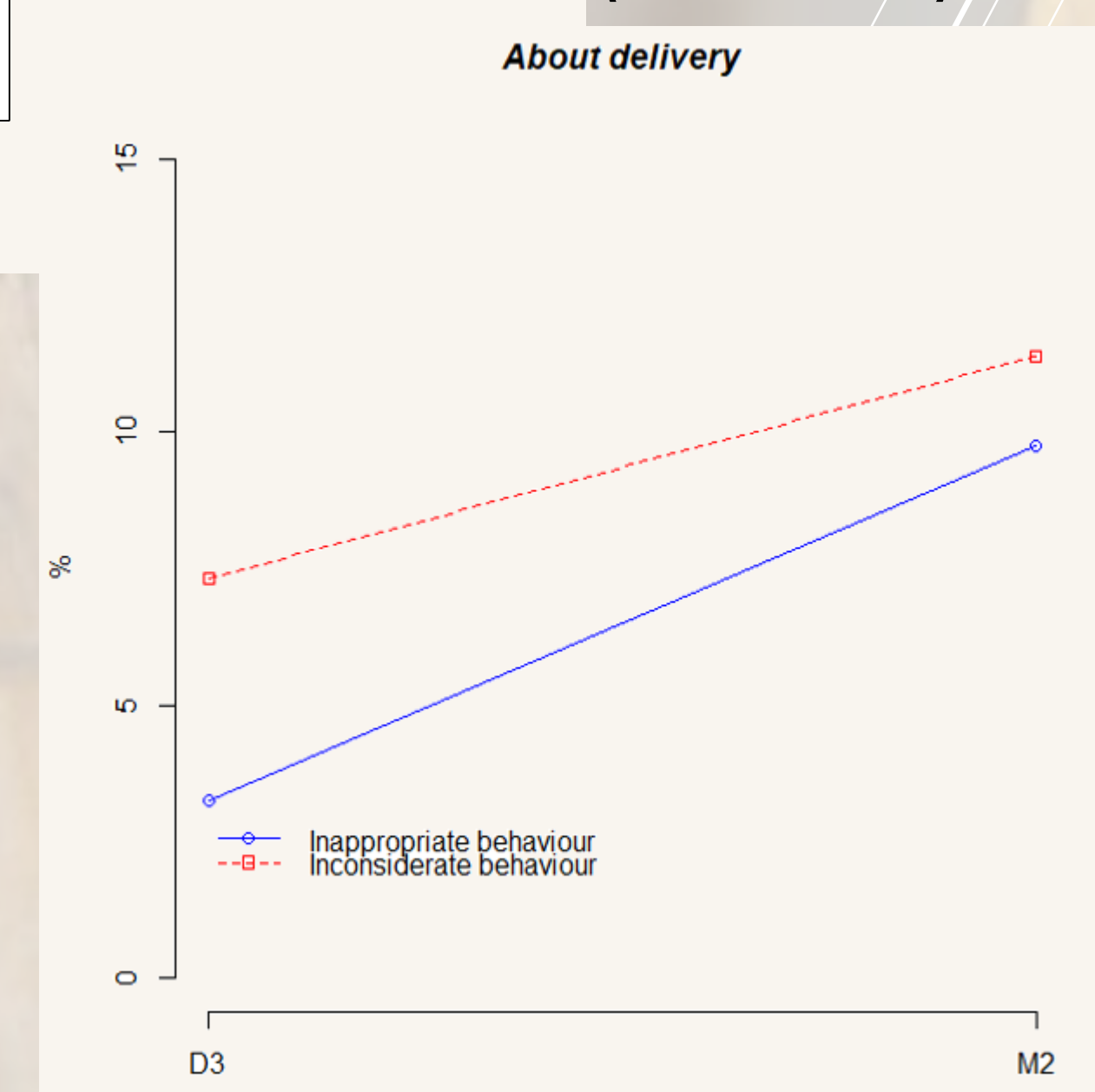
Of the 628 women who responded to the initial self-administered questionnaire, 5.6% (95% compatibility interval 3.9 to 7.7) reported one or more inappropriate behaviours and 9.8% (95% compatibility interval 7.6 to 12) inconsiderate behaviours during childbirth.

Table 1 – Women's assessment of obstetrics professionals' behaviour during delivery (n=628).

	Totally	Adequately	Inadequately	Not at all
Appropriateness of the behaviour				
Appropriate attitude or behaviour, %	82	16	1.9	0.16
Respect for privacy, %	80	19	0.96	0.32
Appropriate vocabulary, %	80	18	1.9	0.16
Gentleness care, %	76	22	2.1	0.16
Considerateness of the behaviour				
Clear and appropriate information, %	77	19	3.5	0.64
Consideration of pain, %	73	22	4.6	0.48
Participation in decision-making, %	73	22	4.3	0.48

Results (2)

The proportion of women who perceived inappropriate behaviours during delivery increased significantly, rising from 3.3% (n=4/123) just after birth to 9.8% (n=12/123) two months afterwards (P=0.043).



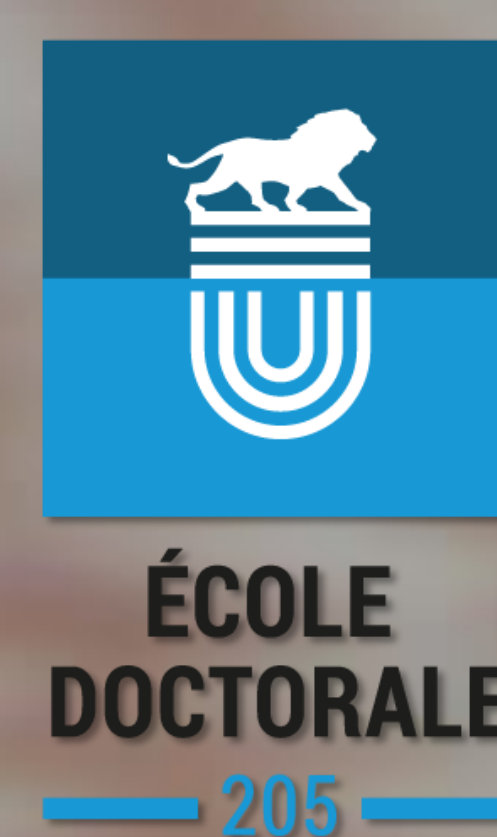
The best linear unbiased predictor (BLUP) method identified women intrinsic propensity as to be 7.54 times greater (p<0.01) than the effect of mother-child separation (OR=2.89) on their capacity to report of inappropriate behaviour.

Details of ethics approval

Individual consent has been obtained. The study has been report to the French commission for information technology and civil liberties (CNIL; registered number: HCL 18-165), and approved by the French ethical research (approval number: CPP 1084 RNI). The study was also registered on the ClinicalTrials website (ID NCT03687879).

Conclusion

Our study showed that 1 woman in 20 reported inappropriate behaviour by professionals during their delivery and twice as many described inconsiderate behaviour. Action to promote more individualised care must be proposed, and studies must be performed to assess its impact on women's experience.



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