

# *Survey of abortion 1962-1964*

## The North-West England Faculty

RECORDER: DR R. W. KENNON  
Mobberley

FOLLOWING THE SURVEY INTO THE incidence of abortion carried out by the North-west England Faculty in 1958/59 (*North-west England Faculty Journal* 1962), the Research Committee of the Faculty decided to extend the survey for a further period. Participating general practitioners were asked to report all cases of bleeding in pregnancy (threatened abortion) which occurred during the period 1 March 1962 to 31 August 1964 inclusive and to record the age and parity of the mother, the date of the last menstrual period, the dates upon which bleeding occurred together with the outcome of the pregnancy.

### Results

Two thousand and fifty-nine pregnancies were reported, of which 230 terminated in an abortion (table I). Bleeding occurred in 316 pregnancies.

TABLE I  
INCIDENCE OF ABORTION OCCURRING IN EACH PRACTICE

<i>Practice</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Pregnancies</i>	<i>Abortions</i>	<i>Incidence per 1,000 pregnancies</i>
B .. .. .	5,100	249	10	40.0
H .. .. .	4,000	222	10	45.0
A .. .. .	3,089	207	12	57.9
G .. .. .	2,500	132	11	83.3
F .. .. .	2,892	217	20	92.2
E .. .. .	2,870	165	20	121.2
I .. .. .	1,700	92	12	130.4
D .. .. .	6,273	346	56	161.8
C .. .. .	1,750	156	28	179.5
J .. .. .	10,500	273	51	186.8
Total .. .. .	40,674	2,059	230	111.7

The total number of pregnancies occurring during the survey period was obtained retrospectively and it is possible that some may not have been included. Assuming that this total is correct, the incidence of threatened abortion is 153.5 per 1,000 pregnancies, and the incidence of complete abortions is 111.7 per 1,000 pregnancies. Of those pregnancies which threatened to abort 73.1 per cent actually did so.

In the first survey (*North-west England Faculty Journal* 1962), the incidence of threatened abortion was 107.1 per 1,000 pregnancies and the incidence of complete abortion 92.6 per 1,000 pregnancies. When the two surveys are taken together the incidence of threatened abortion is found to be 140.2 per 1,000 pregnancies, and of complete abortion 106.2 per 1,000 pregnancies.

Figure I shows that the majority of abortions have occurred by the fifteenth week of the pregnancy.

Examination of the interval between onset of bleeding and the occurrence of complete abortion shows that 17 per cent have occurred within the first 24 hours and that 50 per cent have occurred by the end of the third day.

Of patients who threatened to abort 26.9 per cent proceeded to term, and of these

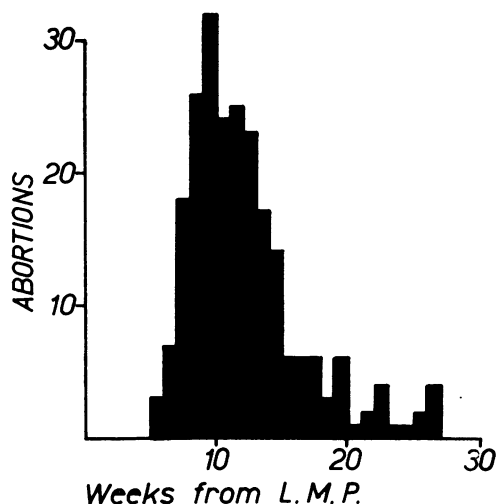


Figure 1  
Period of gestation at which complete abortion occurred

2.4 per cent (two patients) delivered a still-born infant. Of these 1,743 patients who did not have a threatened or complete abortion, 10 delivered a still-born baby. Comparing the still-birth rate in the two groups shows that the still-birth rate in threatened abortion proceeding to term was 23.5/1,000, and in pregnancy not complicated by threatened abortion 5.7/1,000. In both groups taken together the still-birth rate was 5.8/1,000 pregnancies.

The Manchester Regional Hospital Board and the Liverpool Regional Hospital Board reported a total still-birth rate of 18/1,000 pregnancies (Registrar General's Returns, 1966-8), which is considerably larger than the rate revealed in the survey which is the subject of this communication.

Acheson, Acheson and Tellwright (1968) found a similar disparity in the incidence of cerebrovascular disease when hospital based figures are compared with those obtained from general practice and suggest that more accurate incidence rates are obtainable from general practice.

Those taking part in the survey were:—

Drs G. Bergheimer, A. M. Clark, D. M. Curtis, R. Gardner, J. W. Greaves, M. Harrington, A. Hartley, C. R. Kay, R. W. Kennon, W. M. MacKean, B. Spencer, B. S. Tate, R. G. B. Willis, P. J. J. Wren.

#### REFERENCES

- Acheson, Joan, Acheson, H. W. K., Tellwright, J. M. (1968). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, **16**, 428.  
*North West England Faculty Journal*. (1962). **2**, 18.  
 Registrar General's Returns. (1966-68).