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Dear Colleague

Attached please find our **PERINATAL & INFANT MORTALITY SURVEY 2008/9** for your Cluster. The analysis follows on from last year's PCT based reports, but amalgamates the information according to the new Cluster boundaries as well as the respective constituent PCTs.

This information adds to that in the Perinatal Mortality 2008 Report circulated by CMACE earlier this week, but is different in several respects:

- our perinatal statistics include figures up to 2009;
- we include infant mortality rates, i.e. deaths up to 12 months;
- our analyses continue using 3 year moving averages to avoid spurious outliers, which in previous national reports have caused unnecessary and unwarranted alarm;
- our report includes mortality rates adjusted for deprivation scores;
- our analysis allows calculation of customised centiles to help identify the contribution of intrauterine growth restriction to stillbirth rates; and
- we continue to provide crude as well as corrected figures to monitor trends, after excluding previable deaths as well as major congenital anomalies. CMACE have regrettably changed their method of reporting again this year, and now include anomalies in their comparative mortality rates. This puts the West Midlands at disadvantage in regional comparisons, because we have
 - high ascertainment of anomalies thanks to a well established regional register - a service available only in some of the NHS regions;
 - high incidence of congenital anomalies associated with large ethnic minorities; and
 - low rate of terminations for antenatally diagnosed anomalies, on religious or cultural grounds.

The Perinatal Institute continues to focus on understanding all causes and contributing factors of adverse perinatal outcome. We are pleased that the cluster reports, in their totality, suggest a regional downward trend in perinatal and infant mortality, and there are preliminary signs that local service improvements are paying dividends.

In the coming weeks, we will be presenting unit based reports as well as additional analyses based on the routine maternity data collected in the West Midlands, to assess quality indicators and risk factors and how they impact on the health of mothers and babies in our region.

With sincere regards

Professor Jason Gardosi
Director, West Midlands Perinatal Institute