

# Building a Shared Healthcare Landscape: Empowering Maternal and Child Safety through Informed Decision-Making

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## ABSTRACT

Taiwan faced a high cesarean section rate in 2020, with our hospital's primary cesarean rate increasing to 30.96% and repeated cesarean rate at 97.53%, resulting in an overall rate of 38.68%. Recognizing the benefits of vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC), our healthcare providers actively engaged with pregnant women, promoted shared decision-making, and conducted simulation drills. In September 2022, we initiated Patient Safety Week, garnering an Excellent Implementation Award. By Q1 2023, the cesarean section rate reduced to 32.0%, with primary cesarean sections at 22.1%, showcasing a significant rise in vaginal deliveries. Our obstetrics team also earned the Gold Award in the Neonatal Category at the 2022 National Healthcare Quality Awards for their dedication to simulation scenarios and maternal and child safety.

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## INTRODUCTION

International literature indicates VBAC is a safe and fast-recovery mode of delivery that benefits the care of the previous child and avoids leaving scars. However, the VBAC rate in Taiwan is still less than 1% of the total births. If healthcare providers actively participate in the pregnant woman's journey, provide continuous care, and establish mutual trust, it can increase the willingness of pregnant women to choose VBAC. In response to patient safety goal nine, "Maintaining the safety of pregnancy and childbirth," our obstetrics team is promoting policies to enhance maternal and child safety, aiming to increase the overall rate of vaginal deliveries and improve related indicators in our hospital.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

With the exception of high-risk cases, healthcare institutions must provide comprehensive information on the childbirth process to expectant mothers. We have initiated a Patient Safety Week, themed "Maternal and Child Safety," targeting the general public. Additionally, we are championing the Shared Decision Making project, empowering pregnant women to select the delivery method that best aligns with their expectations. To enhance teamwork, our obstetrics team is engaging in simulation drills.

## RESULTS

In September 2022, our hospital conducted Patient Safety Week, hosting a total of 43 sessions with 7,226 participants. The response was overwhelmingly positive, earning us the prestigious Excellent Implementation Award in the medical center category. As of the first quarter of 2023, the overall Cesarean section rate has decreased to 32.0%, with primary Cesarean sections dropping to 22.1%. This notable decline reflects a significant increase in women opting for vaginal deliveries. Furthermore, our obstetrics team clinched the Gold Award in the Neonatal Category at the 2022 National Healthcare Quality Awards (NHQA) for their excellence in simulation scenarios.

## GRAPHS AND TABLES




## DISCUSSION

Patient engagement in the decision-making process for vaginal birth after Cesarean offers numerous benefits. It fosters trust and collaboration between healthcare providers and expectant mothers, allowing them to make informed choices aligned with their preferences and expectations. This approach promotes a sense of empowerment and control for women, potentially increasing their willingness to opt for VBAC, a safer and faster recovery mode of delivery. In turn, this can help reduce overall cesarean section rates, enhancing maternal and child safety, and improving healthcare outcomes.

## CONCLUSIONS

Following a comprehensive evaluation of individual circumstances, our medical team ensures expectant mothers receive clear and professional explanations regarding their various baby delivery options. We encourage collaborative decision-making between pregnant women and their physicians when choosing the mode of delivery. Our objective is to provide high-quality prenatal care in alignment with national healthcare policies, putting the well-being of pregnant women at the forefront of our efforts.