

A Study of information regarding side effects of spinal anaesthesia in obstetrics patients

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There has been a recent change in guidance regarding informed consent by our national guiding bodies such as the GMC and the AAGBI. Moreover, the legal principles pertaining to informed consent have also undergone a change, as highlighted by the decision on Chester vs. Afshar [1] case. In order to modify our practice of informed consent in the light of these changes, we did a study on 50 post-caesarean obstetric patients. The aim of this study was to find out what all side effects of spinal anaesthesia did Wolverhampton obstetric population think is important to know. We spoke to these women on the second or the third day post-section and showed them a long list of all possible side effects of spinal anaesthesia ranging from minor ones such as heavy legs to major ones such as cardiac arrest and death. Our results showed that 46% of the women wanted to know all the side effects of spinal anaesthesia; 21% wanted to know most of the side effects especially the serious ones [therefore 67% (46% + 21%) wanted to know the serious side effects of spinal anaesthesia]; 21% did not want to know the serious ones; and 12% of these women did not want know any of the side effects. In conclusion, most of the women want to know all the side effects of spinal anaesthesia, especially the serious ones. Therefore, during pre-anaesthetic visit of pregnant women and in our antenatal clinics we should give them an option of knowing all of these possible side effects.