

# Identifying high-quality consumer information on birth options in Australia

An environmental scan and evaluation

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# **Summary**

The second Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation (the Atlas) identified substantial variation in the rates of caesarean section for first births in a subset of women aged 20-34 years. These women and their babies were considered to be low risk for a vaginal birth. This variation is important, because the different ways that babies are born (vaginal birth or caesarean section) have different rates of adverse events and carry different risks to women, their babies and future births.1

The Atlas proposed that giving women who are pregnant with their first child information on the benefits and risks of birth options (vaginal birth, instrument-assisted vaginal birth and caesarean section) may enable them to make informed decisions about childbirth. Providing women who had a first birth by caesarean section with information on birth options for subsequent pregnancies was also recommended as a possible way to support the appropriate use of caesarean section.1

To partner with consumers in their own care, clinicians must work with patients to understand and address their needs and preferences. Partnering with patients includes many different, interwoven practices - from communication and structured listening to shared decision making, self-management support and care planning.<sup>2</sup> For these kinds of partnerships to work well, consumer information needs to be clear, easy to understand and use, and describe the options, risks and benefits of different treatment and care pathways.

In response to the recommendations in the Atlas, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) has undertaken an environmental scan and evaluation to identify high-quality consumer information resources on birth options. High-quality consumer information helps consumers to be active participants in their own health care.

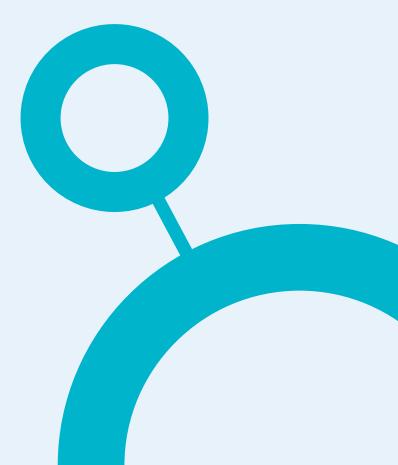
The review used a multi-pronged search strategy to identify 97 consumer information resources on pregnancy and birth options from Australian and international sources. The quality of each resource was assessed using the DISCERN instrument. This tool uses a standardised set of 15 questions to consider key features of the information, leading to an overall rating for each resource. The assessment allowed the quality of the 97 resources to be compared.3

After assessment, 46 higher-quality consumer information resources were identified, which included information on one or more of four topics:

- Vaginal and instrument-assisted vaginal birth
- Caesarean birth
- Birth after caesarean
- Models of care.

The high-quality resources included information of different types (single birth option, several birth options, patient decision aids), from different sources (government, professional organisations, not-for-profit organisations) and in different formats (web-based, downloadable, audiovisual, translations).

These high-quality consumer resources about birth options provide a strong foundation to support pregnant women to make informed decisions about childbirth. By sharing the findings of this review and directing women, health service organisations, and key consumer and professional groups towards these high-quality resources, the Commission can support women's need for high-quality consumer information about birth options. Promoting access to these resources can help empower women to partner with their clinicians and share decisions about how their baby is born.



# Introduction

In 2017, 301,095 women gave birth to 305,667 babies in Australia.4 Pregnancy, labour and birth are natural physiological processes, and each birth is unique and an intensely personal experience.5-7 The decisions women need to make, together with their families, carers and support people, about pregnancy and birth are many and complex. During pregnancy, women will encounter choices about:

- First and second trimester foetal screening
- Clinicians and health service organisations
- Birth setting
- Induction of labour
- Pain relief in labour
- Mode of birth.6

Antenatal care is a series of planned meetings between a pregnant woman and a clinician to assess and improve the wellbeing of the mother and baby during the pregnancy.4 Nearly all pregnant women attend antenatal care, which is associated with positive maternal and child health outcomes, and increases the likelihood of receiving effective health interventions.<sup>4,8</sup> An important aspect of this care is supporting women to consider and make informed decisions about how their baby will be born. 5,6,9-11 Shared decision making is vital to providing maternity care that is woman centred. 5,6,9

Although planning for birth is important, the course of a woman's pregnancy or how her labour will progress cannot be predicted with certainty. 10,12 This uncertainty means that a decision can never be final; circumstances may change, and risks to the mother, baby or both may arise during pregnancy or labour that alter the birth options available, or the relative safety of these options.6,7,9,11,12

Notwithstanding any complexities, the ways in which babies are born - through vaginal birth or caesarean section - have different rates of adverse events and carry different risks to women, their babies and future births.1

## **Birth options in Australia**

Women in Australia have access to different models of care. They can also choose to have a vaginal birth or caesarean section.

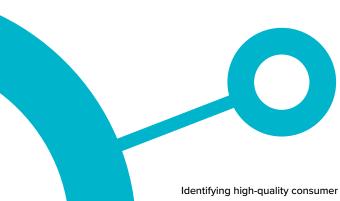
#### **Models of care**

In Australia, low-risk pregnant women can choose from different models of care. 1 In the public and private sectors, obstetricians, general practitioners and midwives can provide these models of maternity care. 5,13

The models of care that women choose or can access may influence, and – in some instances – determine which birth options are available.5,10 The likelihood of women giving birth vaginally or by caesarean section is also influenced by the care they receive during pregnancy and labour, as well as whether their care is publicly or privately funded.<sup>1,9,13,14</sup> When women choose where to have their baby, they are often choosing:

- Where they receive their antenatal care
- Who provides care during pregnancy and labour
- Whether they need to travel for birth, and how far
- What options they have for how their baby is born
- Whether they have close access to certain procedures or services (foetal monitoring, painrelief options, induction or augmentation of labour, water birth, instrument-assisted delivery, surgical interventions)
- Whether there will be out-of-pocket costs for their care. 15,16

Therefore, consumer information resources about models of maternity care and decisions about where a woman will have her baby are also relevant for decisions about birth options.



#### Vaginal birth

A vaginal birth is when a baby is born from the woman's uterus (womb) through her pelvis and out of her vagina (birth canal).<sup>17</sup> In 2017, in Australia, 65% of mothers had a vaginal birth.4

For some women, vaginal birth may start spontaneously and be uncomplicated, with no or limited interventions.7

For others, vaginal birth may be induced or started artificially if it is considered helpful to the mother or baby. In some circumstances, labour may start naturally but not progress as anticipated and need to be augmented. Induction and augmentation may involve breaking the woman's water (the amniotic sac), using a balloon catheter to put pressure on the cervix or using hormones to stimulate contractions.18

Some vaginal births may also be instrument assisted, where forceps or a ventouse (vacuum cup) are used to help deliver the baby and avoid a caesarean section.12,17,19

#### **Caesarean section**

A caesarean section is an operation in which a baby is born through an incision in the woman's abdomen and uterus.<sup>20</sup> In 2017, in Australia, 35% of mothers had a caesarean section.4 A caesarean section may be done if labour is not progressing, or when serious complications are occurring for the mother or the baby and delivery needs to be quick (emergency caesarean). Alternatively, it may be planned before the mother goes into labour (elective caesarean). 1,20 Most caesarean sections in Australia are done before labour starts.1

Caesarean section can be lifesaving, but is associated with risks of serious adverse effects for the mother and the baby, and for subsequent births. For the baby, compared with a planned vaginal birth, planned caesarean section before 39 weeks' gestation is associated with an increased risk of neonatal respiratory morbidity (breathing difficulties). Babies born by caesarean section are also less likely to be breastfed in the first few hours after birth or by the time they leave the hospital than babies born vaginally. Birth by caesarean section has also been associated with higher childhood rates of obesity and asthma.1

For the mother, compared with a planned vaginal birth, a planned caesarean section may result in a longer hospital stay and may increase the risk of haematoma, postpartum infections, anaesthetic complications, hysterectomy due to haemorrhage after birth, and venous thromboembolism.1

Having a caesarean section also increases the risk of complications in future pregnancies, including uterine rupture, placenta praevia and placenta accreta (abnormal placental attachment that can result in massive haemorrhage and the need for hysterectomy). The risk of these complications increases with each caesarean birth a woman has.1

Most women in Australia who have had a caesarean section have one for a subsequent birth. The most common reason for a caesarean section is a previous caesarean section.1

## Variation in the rates of caesarean section

The second Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation (the Atlas) identified substantial variation in the rates of caesarean section for first births in a subset of women aged 20-34 years for whom, along with their babies, a vaginal birth was low risk. It also identified that rates of caesarean section in this population were increasing over time.1

In particular, from 2012 to 2014:

- 75,018 selected women\* aged 20–34 years had a caesarean section, representing 268 caesarean sections per 1,000 selected women
- The number of caesarean sections across 317 local areas (SA3s) ranged from 147 to 438 per 1,000 selected women; the rate was three times higher in the area with the highest rate than the area with the lowest rate
- The number of caesarean sections varied across states and territories, from 246 per 1,000 selected women in Tasmania to 300 per 1,000 selected women in the Northern Territory
- After excluding the highest and lowest 10% of results, the number of caesarean sections per 1,000 selected women in the 254 remaining local areas was 1.5 times higher in one local area than another
- Rates of caesarean section in outer regional and remote areas tended to be higher than in other areas
- The rate of caesarean section for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women was 1.2 times higher than for non-Indigenous women
- The rate of caesarean section for privately funded patients was 1.4 times higher than for publicly funded patients.1

#### Potential reasons for variation in the rates of caesarean section

Some reasons proposed for variation in the rates of caesarean section include:

- Maternal comorbidities, such as obesity, diabetes, smoking and teenage pregnancy, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- Maternal preference for elective caesarean
- Maternal awareness of risks and benefits of birth methods for current and subsequent births
- Obstetric complications

- Availability of midwives, obstetricians and operating theatres
- Clinicians' preferences
- Skills and skills development in instrument-assisted births (forceps or ventouse)
- Access to maternity services in outer regional and remote areas
- Distance of maternity services from women's residence
- Models of care, including continuity of care models
- Level of antenatal care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and women who are socioeconomically disadvantaged
- Private health insurance coverage
- State and territory maternity health policies.1

#### **Recommendations to address** unwarranted variation in the rates of caesarean section

The Atlas suggested areas to focus efforts on that could increase the number of low-risk women aged 20–34 years having vaginal births, and thereby support the appropriate use of caesarean section.

The Atlas proposed that providing evidence-based information on the benefits and risks of birth options to women pregnant with their first child may help address women's fears and concerns, and enable them to make informed decisions about childbirth. Such information would cover vaginal birth, instrument-assisted vaginal birth and caesarean section birth options, and the optimal duration of pregnancy.

The Atlas also proposed that providing women who had a first birth by caesarean section with information on birth options for subsequent pregnancies, including specific information about the benefits and risks of vaginal birth after caesarean section, may help to inform their decisions about later births.1

One of the Atlas's recommendations was for the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) to work with relevant colleges and specialist societies to develop decision support tools on birth options for pregnant women aged 34 years and under who were at low risk for having complications during birth. To start this process, the Commission performed an environmental scan and evaluation of consumer information resources about birth options.

<sup>\*</sup> Selected women are women aged 20–34 years who met all of these criteria: gave birth for the first time, singleton pregnancy (carried one baby), baby's head positioned at the cervix, and baby at gestational age 37-41 completed weeks at birth.

#### **About the Commission**

The Commission was established in 2006 to lead and coordinate national improvements in safety and quality in health care. The Commission works in partnership with patients, carers, clinicians, the Australian and state and territory health systems, the private sector, managers and healthcare organisations to achieve a safe, high-quality and sustainable health system.

An important part of the Commission's work has been to explore the links between safety and quality and person-centred care, and support the consumer role in the safety and quality of health care. This focus is a core part of the Commission's strategic approach to safety and quality.

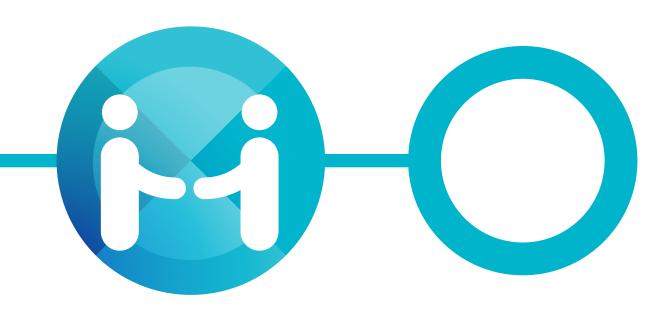
Partnering with consumers is integral to several of the Commission's national frameworks, including the Australian Safety and Quality Framework for Health Care, the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, and the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

To partner with consumers in their own care, clinicians must work with patients, families, friends and other support people to understand and address the needs and preferences of the patient. Clinicians must treat patients holistically and comprehensively with dignity and respect - collaborating, and sharing decisions and responsibility for care.

For clinician-consumer partnerships to work, consumers need access to information that is easy to understand and use, and describes the options, risks and benefits of different interventions and treatment pathways. Providing understandable and accessible health information can improve people's knowledge, understanding and recall about their health and care.21-23

High-quality health information enables shared decision making, supports informed choice about treatment options and can contribute to health literacy so that consumers can be active partners in their own care. 21,24,25 However, much of the information available to consumers on health and health care is extremely variable in quality.

The Commission is working to identify whether highquality consumer health information exists for some key safety and quality issues. This process involves identifying the information that is available, assessing the quality of the information, and determining whether any additional information or resources might be required to support consumer understanding of their healthcare options.\*



<sup>\*</sup> This review of consumer information was completed in July 2020. Details of the resources were accurate at that time, but may have changed since.

# **Environmental scan**

The environmental scan and evaluation of consumer information resources about birth options was undertaken in response to variation in rates of vaginal birth and caesarean section reported in the second Atlas. The second Atlas made recommendations about how to address unwarranted variation in the rates of caesarean section for low-risk women aged 20-34 years, including that the Commission develop decision support tools on birth options for pregnant women.1

This report describes the process and findings of this environmental scan and evaluation. The methods used to identify the resources, as well as the framework used to assess and compare their quality, are discussed. The results of the review and recommendations for how the Commission can support women to access high-quality information about birth choices and make informed decisions about childbirth are also addressed.

#### **Aims**

This review aimed to identify whether high-quality consumer information resources on birth options existed, and whether there is a need to develop additional guidance for women.

The review also addressed deliverables in the Commission's work plan – specifically, the development of decision support tools and information reviews based on recommendations from the Atlas of Healthcare Variation series and clinical care standards.

#### **Audience**

The main audiences for this report are health service organisations providing antenatal and maternity care to women, key professional and condition-based organisations, and consumer peak organisations. By highlighting high-quality consumer information resources on birth options, these organisations can help direct women to them and support informed decisions about childbirth. This report was not developed for consumers specifically, but some consumers may find it useful. Any future resources on this topic will consider the needs of consumers.

#### Scope

This review focused on choices made during pregnancy about vaginal birth and birth by caesarean section. Choices made about life-saving measures after complications of labour or birth, or in emergency decision-making situations were out of scope.

#### Methods

The following sections describe how the Commission identified, reviewed and assessed consumer information resources on birth options.

#### **Search strategy**

Several complementary strategies were used to identify consumer information about birth options. The review focused on consumer information about birth options from Australian sources, supplemented by targeted exploration of resources from key leading international organisations.

#### **Searches**

This section describes the types of searches done.

#### Google search

An internet search using the search engine Google and internet browser Chrome was conducted between August and December 2019. Separate searches were performed with results limited to the first 10 websites identified (excluding advertisements, map results and Commission publications), for each of the terms:

- Patient information pregnancy birth au
- Patient information pregnancy caesarean au
- Consumer information pregnancy birth au
- Consumer information pregnancy caesarean au
- Question pregnancy birth au
- Question pregnancy caesarean au
- Options pregnancy birth au
- Options pregnancy caesarean au
- Decision pregnancy birth au
- Decision pregnancy caesarean au.

#### Australian organisation search

Leading condition-specific organisations and professional bodies in Australia, relevant to women's health and maternity services, were identified and their home web pages were searched for consumer information. The organisations identified were:

- Australian College of Midwives
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- Australian Womens Health Nurse Association Inc.
- National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Australian College of Nursing
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Maternity Choices Australia
- Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies
- Maternity Consumer Network
- Birthtalk.org
- Doula Network Australia
- Caesarean Awareness Network Australia
- Australian Women's Health Network
- Women's Health and Research Institute of Australia
- The Royal Women's Hospital
- Raising Children Network
- Mater Mothers' Hospital.

Searches for consumer information on birth options were also performed for Australian organisations that link to resources that are multilingual or for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women:

- Health Translations
- Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet.

#### International organisation search

Searches were also conducted for consumer information on birth options from the home web pages of key international organisations:

- Wikipedia (international)
- The King's Fund (England)
- Patient Voices (England)
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (United States)
- National Health Service (United Kingdom)
- The Ottawa Hospital Research Institute Patient Decision Aids (Canada)
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (United Kingdom)
- National Childbirth Trust (United Kingdom)
- Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (United Kingdom)
- Childbirth Connection (United States)
- Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (United Kingdom).

#### Invitation to submit materials

The national, and state and territory peak consumer organisations, and key professional bodies were also contacted and invited to provide any materials relevant to the review.

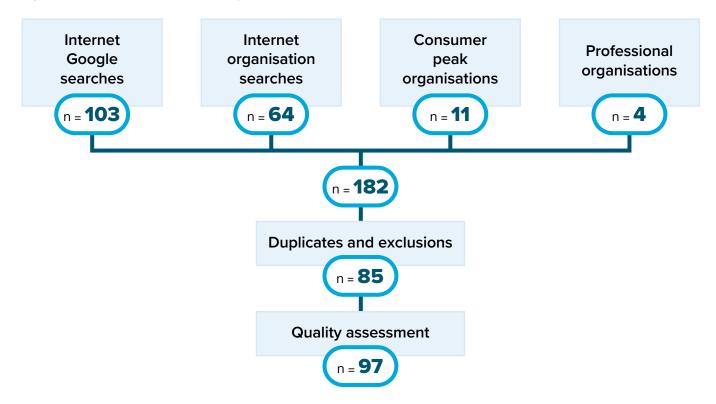
#### **Search result refinement**

The resources identified through each of the search strategies were initially assessed for relevance. Those that did not meet the definition of consumer health information used for this review were discarded. Duplicated results were also excluded from further assessment.

This process identified 97 discrete consumer information resources on pregnancy and birth options for further quality assessment (Appendix 1).

Figure 1 illustrates the number of resources identified from each search strategy, together with exclusions and the final items retained for further quality assessment.

Figure 1: Search result refinement process



#### Information recorded

For each of the resources retained for further assessment, the following information was recorded, if available:

- How the resource was identified
- Title of information
- Type of resource (consumer information about a single option, consumer information about multiple options, option grid, patient decision aid)
- Format (web-based, downloadable [e.g. PDFs or Word documents], audiovisual) and whether a translation was available
- Length
- Author
- URL
- Source type (government, hospital, day procedure service, professional organisation, etc.) and country
- Year published.

#### **Preliminary assessments of** quality using DISCERN

The DISCERN instrument was chosen as a framework to assess and compare the quality of the consumer resources on birth options identified through the review.

The DISCERN instrument was the first standardised index for assessing the quality of consumer health information.<sup>26</sup> It was developed as a validated tool to help users of consumer health information judge the quality of written information about treatment choices.<sup>27-29</sup> It is designed to assist in rating the quality of a publication in terms of its content, and has a dual focus on the reliability and quality of information about treatment choices.3,29

The DISCERN instrument uses a series of 15 criteria (framed as questions) to be answered using a 1-5 rating scale ('no' to 'yes') and one overall rating ('low' to 'high') to help determine the quality of the resource. Questions 1-8 focus on the publication's reliability, and questions 9–15 consider the quality of information on treatment choices. Criterion 16 provides an overall rating of the quality of the publication. The DISCERN instrument criteria are in Box 1.

#### Box 1: DISCERN instrument criteria\*

- Does it describe how each Are the aims clear? treatment works?
- Does it describe the benefits Does it achieve its aims? of each treatment?
- Does it describe the risks Is it relevant? of each treatment?
- Is it clear what sources of Does it describe what would information were used to compile the publication (other happen if no treatment is used? than the author or producer)?
- Is it clear when the information Does it describe how the treatment used or reported in the choices affect overall quality of life? publication was produced?
- Is it clear that there may be more Is it balanced and unbiased? than one possible treatment choice?
- Does it provide details of additional Does it provide support for shared decision-making? sources of support and information?
- Based on the answers to all of the above questions, rate the Does it refer to areas of uncertainty? overall quality of the publication as a source of information about treatment choices.

<sup>\*</sup> Presentation of the criteria used by the DISCERN Instrument to assess the quality of consumer health information.<sup>3</sup>

# **Findings**

This chapter summarises how the 97 consumer resources on birth options performed when assessed against the 16 DISCERN instrument criteria.

The overall rating of consumer resources arrived at through the DISCERN assessment process identified higher-quality resources for four topics:

- Vaginal birth and instrument-assisted vaginal birth
- Caesarean birth
- Birth after caesarean
- Models of care.

To highlight these higher-quality resources (as determined by Criterion 16: Overall rating), their results are presented separately for each of the DISCERN instrument questions 1-15.

Appendix 1 provides the detailed resource information for each resource reference number. Some resources covered more than one topic, and were therefore assessed under more than one topic (see Appendix 2). Appendix 2 also details the ratings given to all 97 resources for each of the 16 DISCERN instrument criteria.



#### Criterion 1: Are the aims clear?

Introductory content that states what the information is about, what it will cover and who might find it useful is important to orientate readers. This content allows consumers to make a judgement about whether the resource is relevant for them and their circumstances.3

In its absence, consumers are left to infer the aims of the resource from its title and headings, which is less accurate. Overall, most resources included some content of this kind, and nearly all the higher-quality resources included this.

Table 1: Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 1

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	11	1, 3, 4, 38, 45, 54, 58, 63, 71, 78, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	14	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 39, 44, 49, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	14	7, 8, 21, 28, 29, 42, 44, 50, 51, 53, 59, 62, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	15	2, 3, 4, 24, 25, 26, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72, 82, 83, 84, 85

#### Criterion 2: Does it achieve its aims?

A good-quality publication will provide the information it aims to provide. If a resource is incomplete, consumers may need more information before they can make an informed decision about treatment or care.3 As most of the resources reviewed either explicitly stated their aims, or had aims that could be

inferred from the title and headings of the publication, it was possible to identify whether they achieved their goals. Overall, most of the resources assessed achieved their aims, as did nearly all the higher-quality resources.

**Table 2:** Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 2

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	11	1, 3, 4, 38, 45, 54, 58, 63, 71, 78, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	14	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 39, 44, 49, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	14	7, 8, 21, 28, 29, 42, 44, 50, 51, 53, 59, 62, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	15	2, 3, 4, 24, 25, 26, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72, 82, 83, 84, 85

#### **Criterion 3: Is it relevant?**

This question considers whether a publication is suited to the reader's needs and relevant to their lifestyle and circumstances.<sup>3</sup> Judging the relevance of the resources considered whether the:

- Publication addressed questions that women might ask
- Recommendations and suggestions about birth options and interventions were appropriate or realistic.3

For pregnant women, a publication's relevance will be influenced by individual circumstances and factors related to the content and presentation of the resource.

Nearly all the reviewed resources were rated moderate or high for this criterion (rating of 3, 4 or 5), indicating that this is a strength of the consumer information on birth options currently available.

**Table 3:** Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 3

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	11	1, 3, 4, 38, 45, 54, 58, 63, 71, 78, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	15	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 33, 39, 44, 49, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	15	7, 8, 21, 28, 29, 34, 42, 44, 50, 51, 53, 59, 62, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	15	2, 3, 4, 24, 25, 26, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72, 82, 83, 84, 85

## Criterion 4: Is it clear what sources of information were used to compile the publication (other than the author or producer)?

High-quality publications will make it clear where the evidence about treatment choices and care has come from. Providing the sources of evidence is important because it allows consumers to check the information or find more information.3 Less than half of the identified resources included references to the sources of information used as evidence, or included a way to check the sources used such as a bibliography, reference list, or the contact details of experts or organisations quoted.3 The absence of references and other ways for consumers to check evidence sources is a limitation of the consumer information on birth options currently available.

Table 4: Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 4

Торіс	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	4	54, 58, 71, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	6	7, 10, 33, 49, 60, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	11	7, 21, 29, 34, 42, 50, 51, 53, 59, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	5	24, 26, 36, 37, 72

# Criterion 5: Is it clear when the information used or reported in the publication was produced?

Identifying the age of a resource is important, as it can help consumers to identify whether information is current and decide if they may need to seek more information about recent developments.3 Assessing resources against this criterion included looking for dates of the main evidence sources, as well as the date of publication and any revisions to the resource itself.3

Due to the low levels of referencing and evidence source identification across all of the resources, dates for the information used to compile the publications were also often lacking. Most resources did include a publication year. For web pages, the copyright year was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

**Table 5:** Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 5

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	10	3, 4, 38, 45, 54, 58, 63, 71, 78, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	13	2, 4, 7, 10, 33, 39, 44, 49, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	13	7, 21, 29, 34, 42, 44, 50, 51, 53, 59, 62, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	9	2, 3, 4, 24, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72

#### Criterion 6: Is it balanced and unbiased?

A high-quality publication will provide fair and impartial information. It should not try to influence the consumer by promoting particular treatment choices or care pathways.3 This assessment criterion considered whether the resource was written from a personal or objective point of view, whether there was evidence that a range of sources were used to compile it, and whether the publication was externally assessed.3 Although very few resources presented information about birth options in an emotive or alarmist way, most were not rated highly for this criterion, as the sources of their statements were unclear or unreferenced.

Although some consumers would infer that government agencies, condition-specific organisations and professional bodies would publish objective and unbiased information, the absence of clear markers, such as evidence sources, may create unnecessary confusion.

**Table 6:** Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 6

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	5	45, 54, 58, 71, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	7	7, 10, 33, 44, 49, 60, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	12	7, 21, 29, 34, 42, 44, 50, 51, 53, 59, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	7	24, 26, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72

# **Criterion 7: Does it provide details of additional** sources of support and information?

Providing consumers with suggestions for more reading or details of other organisations able to give advice and information about treatment choices is an important element of high-quality information.3 Including these details in publications helps consumers find any extra information they need to make decisions about their care. For pregnant women, this could include referral to leading maternity health

organisations and links to professional bodies such as the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Of the 97 resources reviewed, 30 included this kind of information to guide consumers, indicating an opportunity for further improvement. This was also reflected in the resources judged to be of higher quality.

Table 7: Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 7

Торіс	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	4	3, 4, 45, 54
Caesarean birth (n=15)	6	4, 7, 10, 44, 49, 60
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	9	7, 21, 29, 34, 44, 50, 51, 53, 59
Models of care (n=15)	9	3, 4, 24, 25, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72

## **Criterion 8: Does it refer to areas of uncertainty?**

A high-quality publication will highlight that the choice of the most suitable treatment or intervention may not be clear and that it may not be possible to predict the most likely outcome for a given consumer.3 Discussing gaps in knowledge or differences between expert opinions about treatment choices is a key way in which consumer information can acknowledge where there is uncertainty.3 This is of particular importance for

pregnant women, as it is not possible to predict the course of an individual pregnancy and labour, and plans for birth may need to change as circumstances evolve.

Most of the resources assessed provided information about areas of uncertainty, indicating an appreciation of how important this information is for pregnant women making decisions about birth options.

**Table 8:** Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 8

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	10	1, 3, 4, 38, 45, 54, 63, 71, 78, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	13	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 33, 44, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	12	7, 8, 21, 28, 29, 42, 44, 50, 59, 62, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	11	2, 3, 4, 24, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72, 82, 83

#### Criterion 9: Does it describe how each treatment works?

Providing detail about how a treatment or intervention acts on the body is a key piece of information consumers need to understand their options and make informed decisions.<sup>3</sup> For pregnant women, this includes information about:

- How birth will occur
- What medicines they may need or that may be available if needed
- How surgical or instrument-assisted procedures are performed, as well as their effects on the mother and baby.

Less than half of all resources performed well on this criterion, but most of the highly rated publications provided comprehensive information about what was involved for each birth option.

**Table 9:** Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 9

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	11	1, 3, 4, 38, 45, 54, 58, 63, 71, 78, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	15	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 33, 39, 44, 49, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	8	7, 8, 21, 34, 42, 44, 59, 81
Models of care (n=15)	11	2, 3, 4, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72, 82, 83, 84

#### Criterion 10: Does it describe the benefits of each treatment?

A high-quality resource will describe the benefits of each treatment or intervention. This information is needed so that consumers know what to expect, and can decide if a particular treatment or care pathway is associated with an outcome that is important to them.<sup>3</sup> Resources describing the benefits of different birth options can include information about reducing the risk of complications occurring or interventions being needed, as well as improving short- and longterm health outcomes for the woman and her baby.

For pregnant women, information may include how they and their baby may be affected by different birth options, and how these options may affect future pregnancies and births.

There is a strong evidence base describing the benefits of different birth options for pregnant women<sup>1</sup> and most of the resources described these benefits to some extent (rating of 3, 4 or 5).

Table 10: Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 10

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	8	1, 4, 38, 54, 58, 63, 71, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	13	1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 39, 44, 49, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	14	7, 8, 21, 28, 29, 34, 42, 44, 50, 51, 53, 59, 62, 81
Models of care (n=15)	4	4, 35, 36, 37

#### Criterion 11: Does it describe the risks of each treatment?

Most treatments or interventions involve some potential risks or disadvantages. Consumer resources that provide realistic information about these risks can help consumers make more-informed decisions about options. Risks can include side effects, complications and adverse reactions in the short and long term.<sup>3</sup> For pregnant women, understanding the potential risks of different birth options, for themselves, their baby, and future pregnancies and births, is an important part of making an informed decision.

Overall, resource performance varied considerably on this criterion. Variation was seen in the extent to which resources identified risks associated with different birth options, as well as in the level of detail they provided about their frequency and seriousness. This variability indicates another opportunity for quality improvement across the range of consumer resources on birth options. However, those resources judged to be of higher quality generally performed well when describing risks.

Table 11: Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 11

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	9	1, 4, 38, 54, 58, 63, 71, 78, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	15	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 33, 39, 44, 49, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	15	7, 8, 21, 28, 29, 34, 42, 44, 50, 51, 53, 59, 62, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	5	2, 4, 35, 36, 37

# Criterion 12: Does it describe what would happen if no treatment is used?

A high-quality consumer resource will include information about what would happen if the condition was left untreated. Understanding the outcome of having no treatment helps clarify what consumers can expect, and helps consumers identify whether not having any treatment is linked to an outcome that is important for them.3

For pregnant women seeking to understand their birth options, however, the situation is more complex. Pregnancy cannot continue indefinitely, and the baby must be born, either vaginally or by caesarean section.

This review considered 'no treatment' to be what would happen if a vaginal birth (without the assistance of instruments) was attempted. Overall, the resources did not perform highly on this criterion. This may reflect the way in which pregnancy and birth differ from medical conditions or diseases, and how information about treatment options is considered.

Table 12: Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 12

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	2	1, 4
Caesarean birth (n=15)	7	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 60
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	3	7, 8, 62
Models of care (n=15)	3	2, 4, 37

# Criterion 13: Does it describe how the treatment choices affect overall quality of life?

Treatment and care choices may involve changes in lifestyle or circumstances, or affect family and friends in ways that consumers need to know and consider before deciding. A high-quality resource will include information about the broader impacts of treatment choices on everyday life.3

For pregnant women, these impacts include short-term factors such as the expected length of stay in hospital, the pain they may experience, which support people

they can have with them and whether an anaesthetic is necessary. Some longer-term considerations might include the impact on a woman's physical function, mental health, emotional wellbeing, safety and overall quality of life.

Most resources reviewed included some reference to overall quality of life in the information they provided (rating of 3, 4 or 5). All resources judged to be of higher quality performed well on this criterion.

Table 13: Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 13

Торіс	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	11	1, 3, 4, 38, 45, 54, 58, 63, 71, 78, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	15	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 33, 39, 44, 49, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	15	7, 8, 21, 28, 29, 34, 42, 44, 50, 51, 53, 59, 62, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	15	2, 3, 4, 24, 25, 26, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72, 82, 83, 84, 85

# Criterion 14: Is it clear that there may be more than one possible treatment choice?

A high-quality resource will indicate that there is a choice about treatments or interventions, even if full details of the alternatives are not presented in the publication.<sup>3</sup> For pregnant women, there are different options in how they birth their baby.

Overall, the number of resources reviewed here were fairly evenly split between consumer information about a single treatment option and information about multiple options. As expected, consumer information about multiple options, together with the two patient decision aids, performed well against this criterion.

Table 14: Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 14

Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	9	1, 3, 4, 54, 58, 63, 71, 78, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	12	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 44, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	13	7, 8, 21, 28, 29, 34, 42, 44, 53, 59, 62, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	13	2, 3, 4, 24, 25, 26, 35, 36, 37, 72, 82, 83, 84

## Criterion 15: Does it provide support for shared decision making?

Consumer resources can support shared decision making by raising issues for consumers to discuss with their clinicians about what are the best treatment and care choices for them. High-quality consumer resources help consumers prepare for healthcare consultations and talk through issues about their care that might affect people close to them.3

For pregnant women, this could include issues such as birth options, risks and benefits, costs, and outcomes. Around half of the resources reviewed provided good support for shared decision making. As a group, those resources judged to be of higher quality performed well on this criterion.

Table 15: Performance of higher-quality resources for DISCERN criterion 15

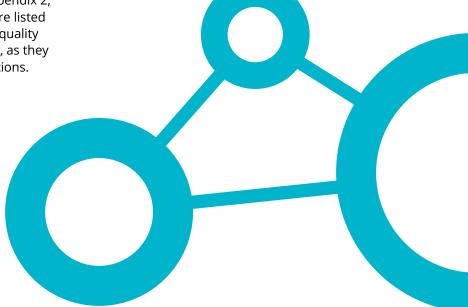
Topic	Number that rated highly (rating of 4 or 5)	Resource reference number
Vaginal birth (n=11)	8	1, 3, 4, 45, 54, 63, 71, 79
Caesarean birth (n=15)	12	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 44, 49, 55, 57, 60, 64, 79
Birth after caesarean (n=15)	13	7, 8, 21, 28, 29, 42, 44, 50, 51, 59, 62, 70, 81
Models of care (n=15)	12	2, 3, 4, 24, 25, 26, 35, 36, 37, 45, 72, 85

## **Criterion 16: Overall quality rating**

All consumer resources have deficiencies and limitations. It is rare that any single publication will rate highly for all criteria.<sup>3</sup> Consumer information about birth options is no different, as the results of this review indicate.

Only two resources were rated highly (rating of 4 or 5) across all of the criteria, and 46 resources were judged to be of 'higher quality'. The individual ratings given for each of the 97 reviewed resources are in Appendix 2, and details of the higher-quality resources are listed by topic in Tables 16–19. Some of the higher-quality resources appear in more than one topic list, as they included information about several birth options.

Resources were of different types and formats, and were authored by a range of organisations in Australia and overseas. The resources provide a foundation of high-quality information from which the Commission can draw on when considering consumer resources that can best support pregnant women to understand their birth options.



#### Vaginal and instrument-assisted vaginal birth high-quality consumer resources

The review identified 11 higher-quality resources on the topic of vaginal and instrument-assisted vaginal birth. This group of resources was drawn from government, hospital, not-for-profit and professional body sources, both Australian and international. The resources in this group were a mix of information about single and multiple options, and one patient decision aid.

Table 16: Vaginal birth and instrument-assisted vaginal birth: summary of highly rated consumer resources

Resource reference number	Overall DISCERN rating	Title	Туре	Format	Author	Source type and country	Year published
1	4	Labour & Birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	The Royal Women's Hospital	Specialist hospital (Australia)	Unavailable
3	4	Pregnancy, Birth and Your Baby	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable	Women and Newborn Health Service	WA Government (Australia)	2017
4	4	Having a Baby	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable; translations	NSW Ministry of Health	NSW Government (Australia)	2016
38	4	Forceps or Vacuum Delivery: Your pregnancy and baby guide	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	National Health Service	National government (UK)	2017
45	4	Care of Women and Their Babies During Labour and Birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	NICE	National health guidance and quality organisation (UK)	2017
54	4	Assisted Birth: Ventouse or forceps delivery	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	National Childbirth Trust	National not-for-profit organisation (UK)	2018
58	4	An Assisted Vaginal Birth (Ventouse or Forceps)	Consumer information about a single option	Downloadable	RCOG	Professional body (UK)	2012

NICE = National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; NSW = New South Wales; RANZCOG = Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; RCOG = Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; UK = United Kingdom; WA = Western Australia.

Resource reference number	Overall DISCERN rating	Title	Туре	Format	Author	Source type and country	Year published
63	4	Assisted Birth	Consumer information about a single option	Downloadable	RANZCOG	Professional body (Australia)	2016
71	4	Using a Bath or Pool During First Stage Labour: A decision aid for women having a vaginal birth	Patient decision aid	Downloadable	Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies	Independent organisation funded by Queensland Government (Australia)	2011
78	4	Induction of Labour	Consumer information about a single option	Downloadable; translations	The Royal Women's Hospital	Specialist hospital (Australia)	2018
79	4	Birth: Vaginal birth and caesarean birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	Raising Children Network	National government (Australia)	2019

NICE = National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; NSW = New South Wales; RANZCOG = Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; RCOG = Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; UK = United Kingdom; WA = Western Australia.

## Caesarean birth high-quality consumer resources

The review identified 15 higher-quality resources on birth by caesarean section. This group of resources was drawn from government, hospital, encyclopaedic, not-for-profit and professional body sources, both Australian and international. Perhaps unexpectedly, Wikipedia was a source of a highly rated publication. Most resources in this group provided information about a single option.

**Table 17:** Caesarean birth: summary of highly rated consumer resources

Resource reference number	Overall DISCERN rating	Title	Туре	Format	Author	Source type and country	Year published
1	4	Labour & Birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	The Royal Women's Hospital	Specialist hospital (Australia)	Unavailable
2	4	Making Sense of Pregnancy and Birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Audiovisual (podcast)	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby	National government (Australia)	2018
4	4	Having a Baby	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable; translations	NSW Ministry of Health	NSW Government (Australia)	2016
7	5	Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based and downloadable	Better Health Channel	Victorian Government (Australia)	2017
8	4	Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	RANZCOG	Professional body (Australia)	2019 (website ©)*
10	4	Caesarean	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby	National government (Australia)	2017
33	4	Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	Wikipedia	Openly editable encyclopaedia	2019

NICE = National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; NSW = New South Wales; RANZCOG = Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; RCOG = Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; UK = United Kingdom; US = United States.

<sup>\*</sup> For web pages, the copyright year was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

Resource reference number	Overall DISCERN rating	Title	Туре	Format	Author	Source type and country	Year published
39	4	Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	National Health Service	National government (UK)	2019
44	4	Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	NICE	National health guidance and quality organisation (UK)	2019
49	4	What is a Caesarean Birth?	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	National Childbirth Trust	National not-for-profit organisation (UK)	2018
55	4	Caesarean Birth	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based and downloadable	Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services	National not-for-profit organisation (UK)	2017
57	4	What Every Pregnant Woman Needs to Know About Cesarean Birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable	National Partnership for Women & Families	National not-for-profit organisation (US)	2016
60	5	Choosing to Have a Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Downloadable	RCOG	Professional body (UK)	2015
64	4	Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Downloadable	RANZCOG	Professional body (Australia)	2016
79	4	Birth: Vaginal birth and caesarean birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	Raising Children Network	National government (Australia)	2019

NICE = National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; NSW = New South Wales; RANZCOG = Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; RCOG = Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; UK = United Kingdom; US = United States.

<sup>\*</sup> For web pages, the copyright year was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

#### Birth after caesarean high-quality consumer resources

The review identified 15 higher-quality resources about birth after caesarean section. This group of resources was drawn from government, hospital, encyclopaedic, not-for-profit and professional body sources, both Australian and

international. The resources in this group were a mix of information about single and multiple options, and one patient decision aid.

Table 18: Birth after caesarean: summary of highly rated consumer resources

Resource reference number	Overall DISCERN rating	Title	Туре	Format	Author	Source type and country	Year published
7	5	Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Downloadable	Better Health Channel	Victorian Government (Australia)	2017
8	4	Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	RANZCOG	Professional body (Australia)	2019 (website ©)*
21	5	Next Birth after Caesarean Section	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	Women's and Children's Health Network	SA Government (Australia)	2018
28	4	Next Birth After a Caesarean	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	Healthy WA	WA Government (Australia)	Unavailable
29	4	Vaginal Birth After Caesarean (VBAC)	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby	National government (Australia)	2018
34	4	Delivery After Previous Caesarean Section	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	Wikipedia	Openly editable encyclopaedia	2019
42	5	Pregnancy: Should I try vaginal birth after a past C-section (VBAC)?	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	Healthwise	Not-for-profit provider of health information (US)	2019

NICE = National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; RANZCOG = Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; RCOG = Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; SA = South Australia; UK = United Kingdom; US = United States; WA = Western Australia.

<sup>\*</sup> For web pages, the copyright year was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

Resource reference number	Overall DISCERN rating	Title	Туре	Format	Author	Source type and country	Year published
44	4	Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	NICE	National health guidance and quality organisation (UK)	2019
50	4	Vaginal Birth After a Caesarean	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	National Childbirth Trust	National not-for-profit organisation (UK)	2018
51	4	Planning a Repeat Caesarean Birth	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	National Childbirth Trust	National not-for-profit organisation (UK)	2018
53	4	Birth Options After a Caesarean: VBAC or ERCS?	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	National Childbirth Trust	National not-for-profit organisation (UK)	2018
59	5	Birth Options After Previous Caesarean Section	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable	RCOG	Professional body (UK)	2016
62	4	Vaginal Birth After Caesarean Section	Consumer information about a single option	Downloadable	RANZCOG	Professional body (Australia)	2016
70	4	Choosing How to Birth Your Baby: A decision aid for women with a previous caesarean section	Patient decision aid	Downloadable	Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies	Independent organisation, funded by the Queensland Government (Australia)	2011
81	4	Vaginal Birth After Caesarean (VBAC)	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	Raising Children Network	National government (Australia)	2019

NICE = National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; RANZCOG = Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; RCOG = Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; SA = South Australia; UK = United Kingdom; US = United States; WA = Western Australia.

<sup>\*</sup> For web pages, the copyright year was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

#### **Models of care high-quality consumer resources**

The review identified 15 higher-quality resources about models of maternity care. This group was collated to recognise the importance of the context of care to the birth options available to women. This group of resources was drawn from

government, hospital and not-for-profit sources, both Australian and international. Most resources in this group were about multiple options.

**Table 19:** Models of care: summary of highly rated consumer resources

Resource reference number	Overall DISCERN rating	Title	Туре	Format	Author	Source type and country	Year published
2	4	Making Sense of Pregnancy and Birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Audiovisual (podcast)	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby	National government (Australia)	2018
3	4	Pregnancy, Birth and Your Baby	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable	Women and Newborn Health Service	WA Government (Australia)	2017
4	4	Having a Baby	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable; translations	NSW Ministry of Health	NSW Government (Australia)	2016
24	4	Choosing Where to Give Birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby	National government (Australia)	2018
25	4	Pregnancy Care and Birthing Options	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	The Royal Women's Hospital	Specialist hospital (Australia)	Unavailable
26	4	Guide to Pregnancy and Birth Care	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	Birth Choices	Australian Government	2017 (website ©)*
35	4	Where to Give Birth: The options	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	National Health Service	National government (UK)	2018

NICE = National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; NSW = New South Wales; UK = United Kingdom; WA = Western Australia.

<sup>\*</sup> For web pages, the copyright year was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

Resource reference number	Overall DISCERN rating	Title	Туре	Format	Author	Source type and country	Year published
36	5	Your Choice Where to Have Your Baby: Information for healthy, low-risk women having their first baby	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable	National Health Service	National government (UK)	2018
37	5	Your Choice Where to Have Your Baby: Information for healthy, low-risk women who have had a baby before	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable	National Health Service	National government (UK)	2018
45	4	Care of Women and Their Babies During Labour and Birth	Consumer information about multiple options	Web-based	NICE	National health guidance and quality organisation (UK)	2017
72	4	I'm Pregnant What Now?	Consumer information about multiple options	Downloadable	Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies	Independent organisation funded by the Queensland Government (Australia)	Unavailable
82	4	Public Hospital	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	Birth Choices	National government (Australia)	2017 (website ©)*
83	4	Private Hospital	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	Birth Choices	National government (Australia)	2017 (website ©)*
84	4	Birth Centre	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	Birth Choices	National government (Australia)	2017 (website ©)*
85	4	Homebirth	Consumer information about a single option	Web-based	Birth Choices	National government (Australia)	2017 (website ©)*

NICE = National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; NSW = New South Wales; UK = United Kingdom; WA = Western Australia.

<sup>\*</sup> For web pages, the copyright year was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

# **Conclusion and recommendations**

Providing understandable and accessible health information can improve people's knowledge, understanding and recall about their health and care.<sup>21–23</sup> High-quality health information:

- Enables shared decision making
- Supports informed choice about treatment options
- Contributes to health literacy so that consumers can be active partners in their own care. 21,24,25

For pregnant women, accessing high-quality information about birth options - including the risks, benefits and likely outcomes of each - can influence their expectations, preferences and choices about how their baby is born. This information is integral to informed decision-making.6

A large amount of information is available to women about pregnancy and birth options in Australia. However, the quality of this information varies substantially. This review suggests that there are several opportunities to improve quality within individual resources, including by:

- Showing more objectivity
- Linking statements about interventions and treatment choices with evidence sources
- Providing details of additional sources of support and information.

This review has, however, identified a group of higher-quality resources that provide comprehensive information about birth options. Together these resources provide a strong foundation to inform pregnant women about their options for giving birth to their baby.

In response to the variation in rates of caesarean section identified by the Atlas<sup>1</sup>, the Commission can best support women's need to access high-quality information about birth options by directing them to the higher-quality resources identified through this review. Rather than develop new decision support tools, raising awareness of existing high-quality resources among key stakeholders and consumer groups can support women to access the information they need, and to make informed choices about childbirth.

Sharing knowledge of these resources aligns with the Commission's role in supporting both access to and the use of high-quality information as a means of empowering consumers to work in partnership with their clinicians and share responsibility for decisionmaking about health care. It also complements the Commission's other work to respond to variation identified in the Atlas, including the development of a clinical care standard to reduce rates of severe perineal tears, and supportive resources on this topic for women.

# **Appendices**

# **Appendix 1: Summary of consumer information resources**

Table 20 summarises all 97 resources reviewed in this report.

**Table 20:** Consumer information resources on birthing options

Resource ref. no.	Title	Search strategy	Type*	Format	Length	Author and URL	Source type and country	Year published†
1	Labour & Birth	Google search 1: Patient information pregnancy birth au	В	Web-based	1 web page with linked content	The Women's (The Royal Women's Hospital)  www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/labour-birth	Public hospital, Victoria, Australia	N/A
2	Making Sense of Pregnancy and Birth	Google search 1: Patient information pregnancy birth au	В	Audiovisual (podcast series)	1 web page with 20 podcast episodes	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/making-sense-of-pregnancy-and-birth-podcast	National government, Australia	2018
3	Pregnancy, Birth and Your Baby	Google search 1: Patient information pregnancy birth au	В	Downloadable	57 printable pages	Women and Newborn Health Service www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Files/Hospitals/WNHS/ For%20Patients%20and%20Visitors/Patient%20resources/ NMHS0588PregnancyBirthAndYourBaby.pdf	WA Government, Australia	2017
4	Having a Baby	Google search 1: Patient information pregnancy birth au	В	Downloadable	172 printable pages; available as single chapters and in 20 translations	NSW Ministry of Health www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/Pages/having-a-baby. aspx www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/Publications/having-a-baby.pdf	NSW Government, Australia	2016
5	Pregnancy and Birth Care Options	Google search 1: Patient information pregnancy birth au	В	Web-based and downloadable	1 web page 7 printable pages	Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ServicesAndSupport/pregnancy-and-birth-care-options	Victorian Government, Australia	2019 (website ©)
6	Labour and Birth Using Water	Google search 1: Patient information pregnancy birth au	А	Web-based	1 web page	Healthy WA www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/J_M/Labour-and-birth-using-water	WA Government, Australia	N/A
7	Caesarean Section	Google search 2: Patient information pregnancy caesarean au	Α	Web-based and downloadable	1 web page 6 printable pages	Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/caesarean-section	Victorian Government, Australia	2017
8	Caesarean Section	Google search 2: Patient information pregnancy caesarean au	Α	Web-based	1 web page with links	RANZCOG https://ranzcog.edu.au/womens-health/patient-information-resources/caesarean-section	Professional body, Australia	2019 (website ©)
9	Caesarean Birth	Google search 2: Patient information pregnancy caesarean au	А	Web-based	1 web page	The Women's (The Royal Women's Hospital) www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/labour-birth/caesarean-birth	Public hospital, Victoria, Australia	N/A

<sup>\*</sup> A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † For web pages, the copyright year © was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

Resource ref. no.	Title	Search strategy	Type*	Format	Length	Author and URL	Source type and country	Year published <sup>†</sup>
10	Caesarean	Google search 2: Patient information pregnancy caesarean au	Α	Web-based	1 web page	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/caesarean	National government, Australia	2017
11	Planned or Elective Caesarean	Google search 2: Patient information pregnancy caesarean au	А	Web-based	1 web page	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/planned-or-elective-caesarean	National government, Australia	2017
12	Your Planned Caesarean Birth	Google search 2: Patient information pregnancy caesarean au	Α	Web-based	1 web page	Raising Children Network https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/labour-birth/vaginal-caesarean-birth/planned-caesarean	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017
13	Your Caesarean Birth and Recovery	Google search 2: Patient information pregnancy caesarean au	Α	Downloadable	30 printable pages	Women and Newborn Health Service www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Files/Hospitals/WNHS/ For%20Patients%20and%20Visitors/Patient%20resources/ NMHS011YourCaesareanBirthAndRecovery.pdf	WA Government, Australia	2017
14	Caesarean Section	Google search 2: Patient information pregnancy caesarean au	А	Web-based	1 web page with links	Healthdirect www.healthdirect.gov.au/caesarean-section	National government, Australia	2018
15	Caesarean Birth	Google search 2: Patient information pregnancy caesarean au	Α	Web-based and downloadable	1 web page and 7 translated versions	Mater Mothers' Hospital http://brochures.mater.org.au/brochures/mater-mothers-hospital/caesarean-birth	Private hospital, Queensland, Australia	2017
16	Policy for First Stage Labour & Birth in Water	Google search 4: Consumer information pregnancy caesarean au	А	Downloadable	2 printable pages	SA Health www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/ connect/628f538046553d24b5b4ff2e504170d4/ First+Stage+Labour+and+Birth+in+Water_brochure_v4_0.pdf?MOD=AJPE RES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-628f538046553d24b5b4ff2e504170d4-mN0BOsC	SA Government, Australia	2017
17	Planned Home Birth	Google search 4: Consumer information pregnancy caesarean au	А	Downloadable	2 printable pages and 6 translated versions	SA Health www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/ connect/9a703f004f3471fb8cfffd080fa6802e/ Planned+Birth+at+Home+in+SA+2018_Brochure_v3_0.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&C ACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-9a703f004f3471fb8cfffd080fa6802e-mPRShvV	SA Government, Australia	2018
18	Category One Caesarean Section Management	Google search 4: Consumer information pregnancy caesarean au	А	Downloadable	2 printable pages	SA Health www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/ da764c00496f89929dbaff3b73084503/Category+1+Caesarean+Section_ brochure_v2_0.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE- da764c00496f89929dbaff3b73084503-mN0AmbL	SA Government, Australia	2018
19	Vaginal Birth After Caesarean Section	Google search 4: Consumer information pregnancy caesarean au	А	Downloadable	2 printable pages	SA Health www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/ connect/048b5c004212819bafc3bf4ccf1f1f13/ Vaginal+Birth+after+Caesarean+Section_brochure_ v2018_03052018.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE- 048b5c004212819bafc3bf4ccf1f1f13-mNC5M2R	SA Government, Australia	2018

<sup>\*</sup> A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † For web pages, the copyright year © was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

Resource ref. no.	Title	Search strategy	Type*	Format	Length	Author and URL	Source type and country	Year published†
20	Caesarean Section	Google search 6: Question pregnancy caesarean au	Α	Web-based	1 web page	Women's and Children's Health Network <a href="https://www.cyh.com/healthtopics/healthtopicdetails.aspx?P=438&amp;np=463&amp;id=2802">www.cyh.com/healthtopics/healthtopicdetails.aspx?P=438&amp;np=463&amp;id=2802</a>	SA Government, Australia	2016
21	Next Birth After Caesarean Section	Google search 6: Question pregnancy caesarean au	В	Web-based	1 web page	Women's and Children's Health Network <a href="https://www.cyh.com/healthtopics/healthtopicdetails.aspx?P=438&amp;np=463&amp;id=2824">www.cyh.com/healthtopics/healthtopicdetails.aspx?P=438&amp;np=463&amp;id=2824</a>	SA Government, Australia	2018
22	What You Need to Know if You Are Considering an Elective C-Section	Google search 6: Question pregnancy caesarean au	А	Web-based	1 web page	St John of God Health Care www.sjog.org.au/news-and-media/blog/2018/08/24/05/50/what-you-need-to-know-if-you-are-considering-an-elective-c-section	Private hospital group, Australia	2018
23	Why You Might Need a Caesarean Section	Google search 6: Question pregnancy caesarean au	А	Web-based	1 web page	Medibank Private www.medibank.com.au/livebetter/families/pregnancy/why-you-might- need-a-caesarean-section/	Private health insurer, Australia	2017
24	Choosing Where to Give Birth	Google search 7: Options pregnancy birth au	В	Web-based	1 web page	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/choosing-where-to-give-birth	National government, Australia	2018
25	Pregnancy Care and Birthing Options	Google search 7: Options pregnancy birth au	В	Web-based	1 web page	The Women's (The Royal Women's Hospital) www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/now- you-are-pregnant/pregnancy-care-birthing-options	Public hospital, Victoria, Australia	N/A
26	Guide to Pregnancy and Birth Care	Google search 7: Options pregnancy birth au	В	Web-based	1 web page with a series of linked pages	Birth Choices/Raising Children Network https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/	National government, Australia	2017 (website ©)
27	Types of Care During Pregnancy and Birth in South Australia	Google search 7: Options pregnancy birth au	В	Web-based	1 web page	SA Health <a href="https://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.">www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.</a> <a href="mailto:aspx?p=438&amp;np=458&amp;id=2750">aspx?p=438&amp;np=458&amp;id=2750</a>	SA Government, Australia	2015
28	Next Birth After a Caesarean	Google search 8: Options pregnancy caesarean au	В	Web-based	1 web page	Healthy WA www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/N_R/Next-birth-after-a-caesarean	WA Government, Australia	N/A
29	Vaginal Birth After Caesarean (VBAC)	Google search 9: Decision pregnancy birth au	А	Web-based	1 web page	Pregnancy, Birth and Baby www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/vaginal-birth-after-caesarean-vbac	National government, Australia	2018
30	Planning for Birth	Google search 9: Decision pregnancy birth au	В	Web-based	1 web page	Children by Choice www.childrenbychoice.org.au/forwomen/ lookingafteryouirselfduringpregnancy/planningforbirth	Not-for-profit, Queensland, Australia	2019
31	Making Decisions During Labour	Google search 9: Decision pregnancy birth au	В	Web-based	1 web page	Pregnancy to Parenting Australia www.pregnancyparenting.org.au/birth/making-decisions-during-labour	Not-for-profit, Australia	N/A
32	Childbirth	Wikipedia	В	Web-based	1 web page	Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Childbirth#Vaginal_birth	Openly editable encyclopaedia	2019

<sup>\*</sup> A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † For web pages, the copyright year © was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

Resource ref. no.	Title	Search strategy	Type*	Format	Length	Author and URL	Source type and country	Year published <sup>†</sup>
33	Caesarean Section	Wikipedia	Α	Web-based	1 web page	Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesarean_section	Openly editable encyclopaedia	2019
34	Delivery After Previous Caesarean Section	Wikipedia	В	Web-based	1 web page	Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delivery_after_previous_caesarean_section	Openly editable encyclopaedia	2019
35	Where to Give Birth: The options	NHS	В	Web-based	1 web page	NHS www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/where-can-i-give-birth/	National government, UK	2018
36	Your Choice Where to Have Your Baby: Information for healthy, low-risk women having their first baby	NHS	В	Downloadable	32 printable pages	NHS https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/NHSE-your-choice-where-to-have-baby-first-baby-sept2018.pdf	National government, UK	2018
37	Your Choice Where to Have Your Baby: Information for healthy, low-risk women who have had a baby before	NHS	В	Downloadable	32 printable pages	NHS https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/NHSE-your-choice-where-to-have-baby-before-sept2018.pdf	National government, UK	2018
38	Forceps or Vacuum Delivery: Your pregnancy and baby guide	NHS	В	Web-based	1 web page	NHS www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/ventouse-forceps-delivery/	National government, UK	2017
39	Caesarean Section	NHS	Α	Web-based	1 web page (and linked pages)	NHS www.nhs.uk/conditions/caesarean-section/	National government, UK	2019
40	Helping Your Baby be Born	NHS	В	Web-based	1 web page	NHS Inform Scotland www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby/labour-and-birth/assisted-birth/helping-your-baby-be-born	National government, Scotland	2019
41	Caesarean Section (C-Section)	NHS	Α	Web-based	1 web page	NHS Inform Scotland www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby/labour-and-birth/assisted-birth/caesarean-section-c-section	National government, Scotland	2019
42	Pregnancy: Should I try vaginal birth after a past C-section (VBAC)?	OHRI	Α	Web-based	6 linked web pages	Healthwise https://decisionaid.ohri.ca/AZsumm.php?ID=1We076	Not-for-profit, US	2019
43	Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC)	OHRI	В	Web-based	1 web page	Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/vbac/about/pac-20395249	Not-for-profit, US	2018
44	Caesarean Section	NICE	Α	Web-based	15 linked web pages	NICE www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg132/ifp/chapter/About-this-information	National health guidance and quality organisation, UK	2019
45	Care of Women and Their Babies During Labour and Birth	NICE	В	Web-based	24 linked web pages	NICE www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg190/ifp/chapter/Care-of-women-and-their-babies-during-labour-and-birth	National health guidance and quality organisation, UK	2017

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Resource ref. no.	Title	Search strategy	Type*	Format	Length	Author and URL	Source type and country	Year published†
46	Information for People Who Use NHS Services for Caesarean Section	NICE	A	Downloadable	3 printable pages	NICE www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs32/resources/information-for-people-whouse-nhs-services-for-caesarean-section-pdf-122615821	National health guidance and quality organisation, UK	2013
47	Birth Options – Choosing where to give birth	National Childbirth Trust	В	Web-based	1 web page	National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/getting-ready-for-birth/birth-options-choosing-where-give-birth	National not-for-profit organisation, UK	2018
48	What is a Straightforward Birth?	National Childbirth Trust	А	Web-based	1 web page	National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/different-types-birth/vaginal-birth/what-straightforward-birth	National not-for-profit organisation, UK	2017
49	What is a Caesarean Birth?	National Childbirth Trust	А	Web-based	1 web page	National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/different-types-birth/caesarean-birth/what-caesarean-birth	National not-for-profit, UK	2018
50	Vaginal Birth After a Caesarean	National Childbirth Trust	A	Web-based	1 web page	National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/different-types-birth/caesarean-birth/ vaginal-birth-after-caesarean	National not-for-profit, UK	2018
51	Planning a Repeat Caesarean Birth	National Childbirth Trust	А	Web-based	1 web page	National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/different-types-birth/caesarean-birth/ planning-repeat-caesarean-birth	National not-for-profit, UK	2018
52	Birth Choices After a Caesarean Section	National Childbirth Trust	В	Web-based	1 web page	National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/different-types-birth/caesarean-birth/birth-choices-after-caesarean-section	National not-for-profit, UK	2018
53	Birth Options After a Caesarean: VBAC or ERCS?	National Childbirth Trust	В	Web-based	1 web page	National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/different-types-birth/caesarean-birth/birth-options-after-caesarean-vbac-or-ercs	National not-for-profit, UK	2018
54	Assisted Birth: Ventouse or forceps delivery	National Childbirth Trust	А	Web-based	1 web page	National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/different-types-birth/assisted-or-complicated-birth/assisted-birth-ventouse-or-forceps-delivery	National not-for-profit, UK	2018
55	Caesarean Birth	AIMS	А	Web-based and downloadable	1 web page 6 printable pages	Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services www.aims.org.uk/information/item/caesarean	National not-for-profit, UK	2017
56	Choosing Your Place of Birth	AIMS	В	Web-based and downloadable	1 web page 5 printable pages	Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services www.aims.org.uk/information/item/choosing-place-of-birth	National not-for-profit, UK	2017
57	What Every Pregnant Woman Needs to Know About Cesarean Birth	Childbirth Connection	А	Downloadable	14 printable pages	National Partnership for Women & Families www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/health-care/maternity/ what-every-pregnant-woman-needs-to-know-about-cesarean-section.pdf	National not-for-profit, US	2016
58	An Assisted Vaginal Birth (Ventouse or Forceps)	RCOG	A	Downloadable	6 printable pages	RCOG www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information- leaflets/pregnancy/pi-an-assisted-vaginal-birth-ventouse-or-forceps.pdf	Professional body, UK	2012

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Resource ref. no.	Title	Search strategy	Type*	Format	Length	Author and URL	Source type and country	Year published†
59	Birth Options After Previous Caesarean Section	RCOG	В	Downloadable	5 printable pages	RCOG www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/pregnancy/pi-birth-options-after-previous-caesarean-section.pdf	Professional body, UK	2016
60	Choosing to Have a Caesarean Section	RCOG	Α	Downloadable	6 printable pages	RCOG www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information- leaflets/pregnancy/pi-choosing-to-have-a-c-section.pdf	Professional body, UK	2015
61	Labour and Birth	RANZCOG	В	Downloadable	4 printable pages	RANZCOG https://ranzcog.edu.au/RANZCOG_SITE/media/RANZCOG-MEDIA/ Women%27s%20Health/Patient%20information/Labour-and-birth- pamphlet.pdf?ext=.pdf	Professional body, Australia	2016
62	Vaginal Birth After Caesarean Section	RANZCOG	А	Downloadable	2 printable pages	RANZCOG https://ranzcog.edu.au/RANZCOG_SITE/media/RANZCOG-MEDIA/ Women%27s%20Health/Patient%20information/Vaginal-birth-after- caesarean-pamphlet.pdf?ext=.pdf	Professional body, Australia	2016
63	Assisted Birth	RANZCOG	А	Downloadable	2 printable pages	RANZCOG https://ranzcog.edu.au/RANZCOG_SITE/media/RANZCOG-MEDIA/ Women%27s%20Health/Patient%20information/Assisted-birth-pamphlet. pdf?ext=.pdf	Professional body, Australia	2016
64	Caesarean Section	RANZCOG	А	Downloadable	4 printable pages	RANZCOG https://ranzcog.edu.au/RANZCOG_SITE/media/RANZCOG-MEDIA/ Women%27s%20Health/Patient%20information/Caesarean-section- pamphlet.pdf?ext=.pdf	Professional body, Australia	2016
65	Preparing for Birth	NASOG	В	Web-based	1 web page	NASOG https://nasog.org.au/information-for-patients/preparing-for-birth/	Professional body, Australia	2010 (website ©)
66	Births After Caesarean	MCA	В	Downloadable	2 printable pages	MCA www.maternitychoices.org.au/uploads/1/5/1/4/15149676/infosheet_vbac.pdf	National consumer advocacy organisation (formerly Maternity Coalition), Australia	2006
67	Preparing Your Birth Plan	MCA	В	Downloadable	1 printable page	MCA www.maternitychoices.org.au/uploads/1/5/1/4/15149676/infosheets_birth_plan.pdf	National consumer advocacy organisation (formerly Maternity Coalition), Australia	2006
68	Labour in Water	MCA	А	Downloadable	2 printable pages	MCA www.maternitychoices.org.au/uploads/1/5/1/4/15149676/infosheets_water.pdf	National consumer advocacy organisation (formerly Maternity Coalition), Australia	2006
69	"Who Cares?" Choosing a Model of Care	MCA	В	Downloadable	1 printable page	MCA www.maternitychoices.org.au/uploads/1/5/1/4/15149676/infosheet_model.pdf	National consumer advocacy organisation (formerly Maternity Coalition), Australia	2006

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Resource ref. no.	Title	Search strategy	Type*	Format	Length	Author and URL	Source type and country	Year published <sup>†</sup>
70	Choosing How to Birth Your Baby: A decision aid for women with a previous caesarean section	Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies	D	Downloadable	16 printable pages	Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies <a href="http://havingababy.org.au/app/uploads/media/pdf/birthyourbaby_previouscaesarean.pdf">http://havingababy.org.au/app/uploads/media/pdf/birthyourbaby_previouscaesarean.pdf</a>	Independent centre based at The University of Queensland and funded by the Queensland Government Australia	2011
71	Using a Bath or Pool During First Stage Labour: A decision aid for women having a vaginal birth	Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies	D	Downloadable	17 printable pages	Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies <a href="http://havingababy.org.au/app/uploads/media/pdf/water%20">http://havingababy.org.au/app/uploads/media/pdf/water%20</a> <a href="mailto:immersion%20in%20labour.pdf">immersion%20in%20labour.pdf</a>	Independent centre based at the University of Queensland and funded by the Queensland Government, Australia	2011
72	l'm Pregnant What Now?	Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies	В	Downloadable	3 printable pages	Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies <a href="http://mothersandbabies.org.au/app/uploads/media/pdf/impregnantPIS.pdf">http://mothersandbabies.org.au/app/uploads/media/pdf/impregnantPIS.pdf</a>	Independent centre based at The University of Queensland and funded by the Queensland Government, Australia	N/A
73	Planning a Positive VBAC	Birthtalk	А	Web-based	1 web page	Birthtalk <a href="http://birthtalk.org/caesarean-and-birthing-after-caesarean-issues/planning-a-positive-vbac/">http://birthtalk.org/caesarean-and-birthing-after-caesarean-issues/planning-a-positive-vbac/</a>	Consumer advocacy, information and support service, Queensland, Australia	2013 (website ©)
74	Planning a Positive Caesarean	Birthtalk	А	Web-based	1 web page	Birthtalk <a href="http://birthtalk.org/caesarean-and-birthing-after-caesarean-issues/planning-a-positive-caesarean/">http://birthtalk.org/caesarean-and-birthing-after-caesarean-issues/planning-a-positive-caesarean/</a>	Consumer advocacy, information and support service, Queensland, Australia	2013 (website ©)
75	Water Birth at The Women's	The Women's	А	Downloadable	2 printable pages	The Women's (The Royal Women's Hospital) <a href="https://thewomens.r.worldssl.net/images/uploads/fact-sheets/Water-birth.pdf">https://thewomens.r.worldssl.net/images/uploads/fact-sheets/Water-birth.pdf</a>	Public hospital, Victoria, Australia	2013
76	Preparing for Labour	The Women's	В	Web-based	1 web page	The Women's (The Royal Women's Hospital) www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/labour-birth/preparing-for-labour/	Public hospital, Victoria, Australia	N/A
77	Assisted Birth	The Women's	В	Web-based	1 web page	The Women's (The Royal Women's Hospital) www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/labour-birth/assisted-birth/	Public hospital, Victoria, Australia	N/A
78	Induction of Labour	The Women's	А	Downloadable	3 printable pages and 9 translated versions	The Women's (The Royal Women's Hospital) <a href="https://thewomens.r.worldssl.net/images/uploads/fact-sheets/Induction-of-labour-181018.pdf">https://thewomens.r.worldssl.net/images/uploads/fact-sheets/Induction-of-labour-181018.pdf</a>	Public hospital, Victoria, Australia	2018
79	Birth: Vaginal birth and caesarean birth	Raising Children Network	В	Web-based	1 web page	Raising Children Network <a href="https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/labour-birth/vaginal-caesarean-birth/vaginal-caesarean-birth">https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/labour-birth/vaginal-caesarean-birth</a>	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2019
80	Birth: An overview	Raising Children Network	В	Web-based	1 web page (with embedded videos)	Raising Children Network <a href="https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/labour-birth/vaginal-caesarean-birth/birth-overview">https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/labour-birth/vaginal-caesarean-birth/birth-overview</a>	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2019
81	Vaginal Birth After Caesarean (VBAC)	Raising Children Network	А	Web-based	1 web page	Raising Children Network <a href="https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/labour-birth/vaginal-caesarean-birth/vbac">https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/labour-birth/vaginal-caesarean-birth/vbac</a>	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2019

<sup>\*</sup> A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † For web pages, the copyright year © was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

Resource ref. no.	Title	Search strategy	Type*	Format	Length	Author and URL	Source type and country	Year published <sup>†</sup>
82	Public Hospital	Raising Children Network	А	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices <a href="https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/settings/public_hospital/index.html">https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/settings/public_hospital/index.html</a>	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
83	Private Hospital	Raising Children Network	А	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices <a href="https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/settings/private_hospital/index.html">https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/settings/private_hospital/index.html</a>	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
84	Birth Centre	Raising Children Network	Α	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices <a href="https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/settings/birth_centre/index.html">https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/settings/birth_centre/index.html</a>	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
85	Homebirth	Raising Children Network	Α	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/settings/home_birth/index.html	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
86	Birth at Public Hospital	Raising Children Network	А	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices  https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/compare_care_options/public_hospital/birth/index.html	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
87	Birth at Private Hospital	Raising Children Network	Α	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices  https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/compare_care_options/private_hospital/birth/index.html	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
88	Birth at Birth Centre	Raising Children Network	А	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices  https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/compare_care_options/birth_ centre/birth/index.html	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
89	Birth at Homebirth	Raising Children Network	А	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices  https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/compare_care_options/home_birth/birth/index.html	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
90	Caesarean Section at Public Hospital	Raising Children Network	А	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices  https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/compare_care_options/public_hospital/caesarean/index.html	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
91	Caesarean Section at Private Hospital	Raising Children Network	А	Web-based	1 web page	Birth Choices  https://birthchoices.raisingchildren.net.au/compare_care_options/private_hospital/caesarean/index.html	Government-funded parenting website, Australia	2017 (website ©)
92	Evidence on: Waterbirth (Note: Available with email sign-up but cannot be made otherwise available online)	Health Care Consumers' Association ACT	A	Downloadable	1 printable page	Evidence based birth <a href="https://evidencebasedbirth.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Waterbirth-Handout.pdf">https://evidencebasedbirth.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Waterbirth-Handout.pdf</a>	Not-for-profit, Australia	2017
93	Vaginal Birth	Health Care Consumers' Association ACT	А	Web-based	1 web page	Having a Baby in Canberra www.havingababyincanberra.org.au/labour-and-birth/birth-options/ vaginal-birth/	Not-for-profit, ACT, Australia	2019 (website ©)

<sup>\*</sup> A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † For web pages, the copyright year © was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

Resource ref. no.	Title	Search strategy	Type*	Format	Length	Author and URL	Source type and country	Year published†
94	Caesarean Birth	Health Care Consumers' Association ACT	Α	Web-based	1 web page	Having a Baby in Canberra <a href="https://www.havingababyincanberra.org.au/labour-and-birth/birth-options/caesarean-birth/">www.havingababyincanberra.org.au/labour-and-birth/birth-options/caesarean-birth/</a>	Not-for-profit, ACT, Australia	2019 (website ©)
95	Vaginal Birth After a Caesarean	Health Care Consumers' Association ACT	А	Web-based	1 web page	Having a Baby in Canberra www.havingababyincanberra.org.au/labour-and-birth/birth-options/ vaginal-birth-caesarean/	Not-for-profit, ACT, Australia	2019 (website ©)
96	Pregnancy Care and Birth Options	Health Care Consumers' Association ACT	А	Web-based	1 web page	ACT Health www.health.act.gov.au/services-and-programs/women-youth-and-children/pregnancy-and-birth/pregnancy-care-and-birthing	ACT Government, Australia	2019
97	Induction of Labour	Health Consumers Queensland	А	Downloadable	1 printable page	MCA www.maternitychoices.org.au/uploads/1/5/1/4/15149676/infosheet_ induction.pdf	National consumer advocacy organisation (formerly Maternity Coalition), Australia	2006

<sup>\*</sup> A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † For web pages, the copyright year © was used as the publication year if no other information was available.

# **Appendix 2: DISCERN assessment results**

Table 21 outlines the DISCERN assessment results for each of the 97 resources reviewed in this report.

The first 15 DISCERN criteria (framed as questions) are rated on a five-point scale (1 = no, 5 = yes). The rating scale is designed to help identify whether the quality criterion in question is present or has been met by the publication, and follows general guidelines:

- A score of 5 should be given if the answer to the question is a definite 'yes' the quality criterion has been completely
- A score of 2, 3 or 4 should be given if the publication meets the criterion to some extent; how high or low the partial rating is depends on judgements about the extent of these shortcomings
- A score of 1 should be given if the answer to the question is a definite 'no' the quality criterion has not been fulfilled at all.

**Table 21:** DISCERN assessment results for all resources

Resource ref. no.	Type*	<b>Topic</b> †	C1: Are the aims clear?	C2: Does it achieve its aims?	C3: Is it relevant?	C4: Is it clear what sources of info were used to compile the publication?	C5: Is it clear when the info used or reported in the publication was produced?	and	support	C8: Does it refer to areas of uncertainty?	C9: Does it describe how each treatment works?	C10: Does it describe the benefits of each treatment?	C11: Does it describe the risks of each treatment?	C12: Does it describe what would happen if no treatment is used?	C13:    Does it describe how treatment choices affect overall quality of life?	C14: Is it clear that there may be more than one possible treatment choice?	C15: Does it provide support for shared decision making?	C16: Overall quality of the publication
1	В	G, V, C	4	4	5	1	1	3	2	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4
2	В	G, M, C	4	4	5	1	5	3	3	4	5	3	4	4	5	5	5	4
3	В	G, M, V	5	5	5	1	5	3	5	4	4	3	3	3	4	5	5	4
4	В	G, M, V, C	5	5	5	1	5	3	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	4
5	В	G, M	4	4	4	1	2	3	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	5	5	3
6	Α	٧	5	5	4	1	1	3	4	3	2	4	3	2	2	3	4	3
7	Α	C, B	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5
8	Α	C, B	4	5	5	1	2	3	3	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4
9	Α	C, B	4	4	4	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	3
10	Α	С	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	3	4
11	Α	С	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	2	3	2	3	2	4	4	3
12	Α	С	4	3	3	5	5	3	2	2	5	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
13	Α	С	5	3	3	1	5	3	4	4	5	2	5	1	4	2	3	3
14	Α	С	3	3	1	1	5	2	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
15	Α	С	4	3	3	1	5	3	1	2	2	2	5	1	4	2	2	3
16	Α	V	4	3	3	1	5	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	2
17	Α	M, V	4	4	4	1	5	3	1	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2
18	Α	С	3	3	3	1	5	3	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
19	Α	В	4	3	4	5	5	4	1	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	3	3

<sup>\*</sup>A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † C = caesarean birth; B = birth after caesarean; G = general pregnancy; M = models of care; V = vaginal birth; VA = vaginal birth - assisted.

Resource ref. no.	Type*	<b>Topic</b> †	C1: Are the aims clear?	achieve	C3: Is it relevant?	C4: Is it clear what sources of info were used to compile the publication?	C5: Is it clear when the info used or reported in the publication was produced?	and	support	C8: Does it refer to areas of uncertainty?	C9: Does it describe how each treatment works?	C10: Does it describe the benefits of each treatment?	C11: Does it describe the risks of each treatment?	C12: Does it describe what would happen if no treatment is used?	C13: Does it describe how treatment choices affect overall quality of life?	C14: Is it clear that there may be more than one possible treatment choice?	C15: Does it provide support for shared decision making?	C16: Overall quality of the publication
20	Α	С	4	3	3	1	5	3	4	2	4	2	1	2	2	2	2	3
21	В	В	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
22	Α	С	4	3	4	1	5	3	1	2	4	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
23	Α	С	4	4	4	3	5	3	1	2	2	2	4	2	3	3	3	3
24	В	М	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	4
25	В	М	4	4	4	1	1	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	4	4
26	В	М	5	4	5	4	2	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	4	4
27	В	М	4	4	3	1	5	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	4	3	3
28	В	В	4	4	4	1	2	3	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	5	5	4
29	Α	В	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	3	4	4	4	4
30	В	М	3	3	3	1	5	3	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	2
31	В	М	4	4	4	5	1	4	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	4	5	2
32	В	V, C	3	3	3	5	5	4	3	4	5	3	3	3	2	3	1	3
33	Α	С	3	3	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	3	4	3	3	3	2	4
34	В	В	3	3	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	3	3	4	2	4
35	В	М	4	4	5	2	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
36	В	М	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5
37	В	М	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
38	В	VA	4	4	4	1	5	3	3	5	5	5	5	3	4	3	3	4
39	Α	С	4	4	4	1	5	3	3	3	5	4	4	3	4	3	3	4
40	В	VA, C	4	3	3	1	5	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
41	Α	С	3	3	3	1	5	3	2	2	4	3	2	3	3	2	2	3
42	В	В	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	5
43	Α	В	4	4	4	1	2	3	2	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
44	Α	C, B	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	3	4	4	5	4
45	В	M, V	5	5	4	3	5	4	5	4	5	2	2	3	4	3	5	4

<sup>\*</sup> A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † C = caesarean birth; B = birth after caesarean; G = general pregnancy; M = models of care; V = vaginal birth; VA = vaginal birth - assisted.

Resource ref. no.	Type*	<b>Topic</b> †	C1: Are the aims clear?	achieve	C3: Is it relevant?	C4: Is it clear what sources of info were used to compile the publication?	C5: Is it clear when the info used or reported in the publication was produced?	and	support	C8: Does it refer to areas of uncertainty?	C9: Does it describe how each treatment works?	C10: Does it describe the benefits of each treatment?	C11: Does it describe the risks of each treatment?	C12: Does it describe what would happen if no treatment is used?	C13: Does it describe how treatment choices affect overall quality of life?	C14: Is it clear that there may be more than one possible treatment choice?	C15: Does it provide support for shared decision making?	C16: Overall quality of the publication
46	Α	С	4	3	3	2	5	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	1	2	3	2
47	В	М	5	4	4	5	5	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3
48	А	V	4	3	3	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3
49	Α	С	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4
50	А	В	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	4
51	А	В	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	3	3	5	5	3	4	3	4	4
52	В	В	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3
53	В	В	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	4
54	Α	VA	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
55	Α	С	4	4	5	1	5	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
56	В	М	4	4	4	1	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3
57	Α	С	4	4	5	1	5	3	2	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
58	Α	VA	5	5	5	4	5	4	3	3	5	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
59	В	В	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	3	4	5	5	5
60	Α	С	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	5
61	В	G, V, C	4	4	3	1	5	3	1	4	2	2	2	3	3	4	3	3
62	Α	В	4	4	5	1	5	3	1	5	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	4
63	Α	VA	4	4	5	1	5	3	1	4	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	4
64	Α	С	4	4	5	1	5	3	1	4	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	4
65	В	G, M, V, C, B	5	3	3	1	2	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	2	3
66	В	В	5	3	3	2	5	3	1	4	2	2	4	3	3	5	4	3
67	В	M, V	4	3	3	3	5	3	1	3	1	2	1	2	2	3	4	3
68	Α	V	4	3	3	3	5	2	1	3	3	4	1	2	3	3	3	3
69	В	М	4	4	4	2	5	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	5	3	3
70	D	В	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	5	2	2	5	3	4	5	5	4
71	D	V	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	5	4	5	3	4	5	5	4

<sup>\*</sup> A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † C = caesarean birth; B = birth after caesarean; G = general pregnancy; M = models of care; V = vaginal birth; VA = vaginal birth - assisted.

Resource ref. no.	Type*	<b>Topic</b> †	C1: Are the aims clear?	achieve	C3: Is it relevant?	C4: Is it clear what sources of info were used to compile the publication?	C5: Is it clear when the info used or reported in the publication was produced?	and	support	C8: Does it refer to areas of uncertainty?	C9: Does it describe how each treatment works?	C10: Does it describe the benefits of each treatment?	C11: Does it describe the risks of each treatment?	C12: Does it describe what would happen if no treatment is used?	C13: Does it describe how treatment choices affect overall quality of life?	C14: Is it clear that there may be more than one possible treatment choice?	C15: Does it provide support for shared decision making?	C16: Overall quality of the publication
72	В	G, M	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	3	3	3	3	5	4	4
73	Α	В	4	3	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	2
74	Α	С	4	3	3	1	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	3	2	3	2
75	Α	V	5	4	4	2	5	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	3
76	В	V, C	4	4	2	1	1	3	2	4	1	1	1	2	1	5	3	2
77	В	VA	4	4	4	1	1	3	2	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3
78	Α	VA	4	4	4	1	5	3	2	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	4
79	В	V, C	4	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	4	5	5	3	5	5	4	4
80	В	V, C	4	4	3	5	5	5	3	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	3
81	Α	В	4	4	5	5	5	5	2	4	4	5	5	3	4	5	4	4
82	Α	М	4	4	4	1	2	3	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4
83	Α	М	4	4	4	1	2	3	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4
84	Α	М	4	4	4	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4
85	Α	М	4	4	4	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	4
86	Α	М	4	4	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
87	Α	М	4	4	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
88	Α	М	4	4	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
89	Α	М	4	4	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
90	Α	M, C	4	4	3	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3
91	Α	M, C	4	4	3	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3
92	Α	V	4	4	3	5	5	4	2	4	2	4	4	3	3	4	2	3
93	Α	V	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	1	3	2	3	3	2	2	2
94	А	С	4	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	4	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
95	Α	В	4	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	1	3	1	2	2	2
96	Α	М	4	4	3	1	5	3	1	2	4	2	1	3	2	4	2	2
97	Α	VA	4	3	3	4	5	4	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	3

<sup>\*</sup> A = consumer information about a single option; B = consumer information about multiple options; C = option grid; D = patient decision aid. † C = caesarean birth; B = birth after caesarean; G = general pregnancy; M = models of care; V = vaginal birth; VA = vaginal birth - assisted.

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