



CIMS
COALITION FOR IMPROVING
MATERNITY SERVICES

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Via email

TIME Magazine
Letters to the Editor
Email: letters@time.com

Dear Editor:

The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) strongly objects to your article, "Choosy Mothers Choose Caesareans" (April 17, 2008).

The Listening to Mothers II survey, conducted for Childbirth Connection by Harris Interactive, is the only valid national data on how U.S. women *themselves* feel about their childbearing experiences. This landmark survey showed the following: Only 0.4 percent of U.S. mothers who gave birth in 2005 and had a primary cesarean (first birth by cesarean section) chose to have one without a medical indication. For 64 percent of women who had a primary cesarean, the providers alone made that decision during labor, and in 24 percent of the cases the providers made the decision before labor. For 56 percent of the mothers with a prior cesarean section, the providers *decided for the mothers* that they would have a repeat operation.

Cesarean surgery can be life-saving, but should never be entered into lightly or without clear medical indication because of the serious short-term and long-term risks to both the mother and newborn. Sadly, the majority of mothers did not know the common adverse effects of cesarean surgery. For these mothers, their right to informed consent and informed refusal as granted to them by HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, 1996) was potentially violated.

"Choosing" implies access to accurate and complete information about the risks and benefits of the surgery for the mother and her newborn, discussion with her care provider during pregnancy, and finally the mother herself making an informed decision. CIMS advocates for all mothers to receive accurate and up-to-date information about the benefits and risks of all procedures, drugs, and tests suggested for use during pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period, with the right to informed consent and informed refusal.

TIME Magazine has a responsibility to provide accurate information to its readers. On behalf of all mothers and their babies, CIMS is deeply saddened by the way in which this article portrays what is, in fact, a disturbing trend with dire implications for maternal and infant outcomes.

Sincerely,

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Chair, CIMS Public Relations Committee

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Making Mother-Friendly Care A Reality

CIMS is a not-for-profit organization recognized as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). Our mission is to promote a wellness model of maternity care that will improve birth outcomes and substantially reduce costs.