

OBSTETRIC RECORD OF THE CYPRUS EMERGENCY JULY 1974 TO JULY 1975

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SUMMARY: A review of the obstetric work load during the Cyprus emergency has shown that the Army Obstetric Service can cope with an unexpected acute obstetric load, working under difficult circumstances, and still be able to produce gratifying end results, reflected in a Perinatal Mortality of 10/1000 total births.

This is an account of the problems, their management and results, of a considerable number of obstetric emergency cases dealt with by the Obstetric Division of the British Military Hospital (B.M.H.), Dhekelia, during and after, the start of hostilities 'the Cyprus troubles' on 15 July 1974, up to a period of 12 months, till 31 July 1975.

The obstetric division has a total of 15 beds, staffed by 5 midwives, plus auxiliary staff. There is one consultant assisted by a part-time medical officer who holds the D.R.C.O.G. The average monthly delivery rate, prior to the emergency was about 13, all booked cases, nearly all of them being dependants of British servicemen or entitled United Kingdom (U.K.) based civilians.

On 15 July 1974, hostilities broke out between the Greeks and the Turks on the island, resulting in the evacuation of all British Service families and U.K. based civilians from the dormitory towns of Nicosia, Larnaca and Famagusta (Fig. 1) into the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (S.B.A.) of Dhekelia prior to their further evacua-

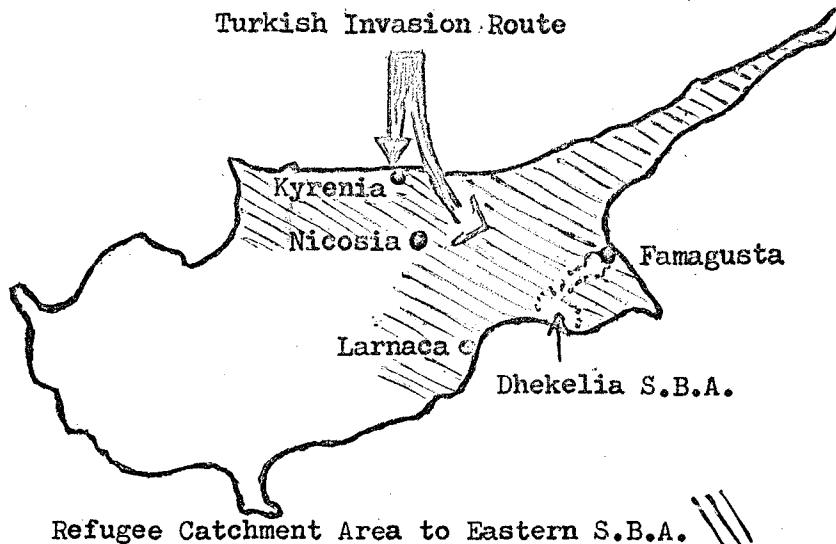


Fig. 1.

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tion back to the U.K. Amongst these were quite a few pregnant women. At the same time, about 80,000 Cypriot refugees (mostly Greeks) from the surrounding towns and villages, converged on the Eastern S.B.A. of Dhekelia. The hospitals available at that time, were a local 60 bedded hospital at Larnaca, about 8 miles from Dhekelia, and the B.M.H. at Dhekelia.

Soon after the start of hostilities on 15 July 1974, nearly the entire local labour force employed in the B.M.H. area (ward maids, cleaners, kitchen and laundry staff, and others) went absent, causing further considerable extra work on the existing limited and over-stretched staff of the hospital. But for the work of the numerous volunteers from service families and the devotion to duty of the existing staff, the working of the B.M.H. could not have been maintained. An extra 15 bedded lying-in ward had to be opened up towards the end of July 1974 and manned by the existing staff, to take postpartum refugee patients, the majority of whom had no homes to go to and lived in temporary tents and makeshift homes. By this time there were nearly 80,000 displaced persons in and around the Eastern S.B.A. Pending the arrival of extra staff from the U.K., mobilisation of the existing dormant nursing resources from the Dhekelia Garrison was carried out in order to man the very heavy extra load by the B.M.H. The relief crew from the U.K. arrived by the end of September 1974. By December 1974 when the relief crew returned to the U.K., the total number of displaced persons around the Eastern S.B.A. had settled down to about 25,000.

Table I shows the work load from July 1974 to July 1975, during which time

Table I
Monthly deliveries, Service and local Cypriot patients

Month	a. Service and U.K. based civilians	b. Cypriot (Local)	Cypriot (Unbooked)	Total a and b
May 74	16	—	—	16
June 74	10	—	—	10
July 74	21	7	5	28
August 74	17	50	46	67
September 74	5	61	60	66
October 74	6	50	40	56
November 74	6	32	30	38
December 74	4	20	18	24
January 75	4	26	16	30
February 75	6	23	10	29
March 75	5	40	14	45
April 75	2	24	8	26
May 75	1	29	7	30
June 75	5	21	2	26
July 75	3	26	2	29

Table II
Monthly workload July 1974 to July 1975

Month/Year 1974-1975	Normal delivery		Forceps		Venthouse		Breech		L.S.C.S.		Foetal loss		Remarks
	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB	
July 74	17	5	2	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	1 SB(ND)	—	SB—British—Hydrocephalous—41/52—ND—7.0 lb
August 74	15	44	1	—	—	2	1	—	4	—	—	—	Exchange transfusion × 3—NB—Anti A incompatibility
September 74	3	50	2	4	—	2	1	4	1	3	—	—	SB—Compound presentation—Forceps. BW—3 lb 8 oz
October 74	12	33	2	2	—	1	—	2	2	2	—	—	
November 74	6	19	—	6	—	2	2	2	—	1	—	1 SB	SB—Mixed APH—ND—BW 5 lb 6 oz
December 74	6	12	—	3	—	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	
January 75	10	14	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
February 75	7	15	1	1	1	1	1 SB	—	2	1	1 SB	—	SB—Breech at term—IUD—7 lb 4 oz. Booked refugee
March 75	24	12	1	2	2	—	2	—	3	—	—	—	
April 75	14	7	2	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	
May 75	20	7	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	
June 75	18	2	3	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	
July 75	22	2	1	—	—	—	1	—	3	—	—	1 NND	NND—NB—Premature—Pulmonary haemorrhage. BW 3 lb 12 oz
Totals (496)	174	222	18	20	6	11	11	8	18	8	2	—	

Notes—B=Booked. NB=Unbooked. ND=Normal delivery. SB=Stillbirth. NND=Neonatal death.

494 babies were delivered (85 British and 409 local Cypriot). There were 258 emergency unbooked cases (52 per cent). During the first half of the emergency period (July to December 1974), out of a total of 279 cases, 199 were unbooked (71 per cent). During the second half (January to July 1975), out of a total of 215 cases, 59 were unbooked (27.4 per cent). The reason for this drop in unbooked cases was the result of efforts made to induce the local Cypriot refugee patients to attend our antenatal clinic, instead of just arriving at the hospital when labour commenced.

Table II shows the total monthly work load over the period under review. August, September and October 1974 were the most busy months (the extra staff from the U.K. arrived at the end of September 1974), during which time the large majority of admitted cases were unbooked and in labour. It is gratifying to note that in spite of all the difficulties faced at the time, only one baby (S.B.) was lost during that period, and that was the result of a compound presentation in a spontaneous premature labour.

Table III shows that 42 per cent out of a total of 19 breech presentations were unbooked. One baby was lost, a sudden intra-uterine death near term, in a local Cypriot booked case. No foetal loss was recorded in the unbooked cases. A foetal mortality of 5.2 per cent and a Lower Segment Caesarean Section (L.S.C.S.) rate of 26 per cent is considered reasonable in view of the number of unbooked cases.

Forceps Rate of 7.6 per cent was noted (Table IV). Seventy-three per cent of the total number of forceps cases were again in unbooked patients. The commonest cause was delay in the second stage of labour (73 per cent), no appreciable difference was noted between booked and unbooked cases there.

The L.S.C.S. rate was 5.2 per cent (Table V), a third of these were unbooked cases. Out of the 9 unbooked emergency cases that necessitated a L.S.C.S., there were 3 cases of failed trial labour due to cephalopelvic disproportion (C.P.D.); three breech presentations—one with previous L.S.C.S., one with previous bad obstetric history, and one senior primip; two cases of unstable lie—one a brow presentation, and the other a persistent oblique lie in labour. In one case there was failure to progress in the first stage due to incoordinate uterine action. There was no foetal loss.

No significant increase in the live low birth weight baby rate was observed (Table VI), in spite of the fact that 52 per cent of cases were unbooked. Only one baby (3 lb 8 oz) was lost out of a total of 20 live low birth weight babies. The total Perinatal Mortality (Table VII) of 10 per 1000 total births is quite acceptable, considering that 52 per cent of cases were unbooked, and the available resources rather limited. One baby was lost out of 85 booked British cases, and 4 babies were lost out of 409 local Cypriot cases, only one of these was booked.

Table III
Breech deliveries—Total of 19 cases
Mortality of breech presentation of 5.2 per cent

Category	Assisted breech delivery	L.S.C.S.	Remarks
Booked	9	2	1 Intra-uterine death
Unbooked	5	3	No foetal loss

Table IV

Forceps deliveries—Total of 38 cases
Forceps rate of 7.6 per cent

Indications	Unbooked	Booked
Delay second stage	15	13
Persistent occipito-posterior—deep transverse arrest	2	3
Foetal distress	3	2

Table V

Lower segment of caesarean sections
Total of 26 cases. Rate of 5.2 per cent

Indications	British	Local Cypriot
Failure to progress in first stage	3 (B)	1 (NB)
Cephalopelvic disproportion	2 (B)	5 (3 NB. 2B)
Previous lower segment caesarean section	—	6 (B)
Breech	1 (B)	4 (3 NB. 1B)
Foetal distress and, or, dysmaturity	2 (B)	—
Unstable lie	—	2 (NB)

Notes — B=Booked. NB=Unbooked.

Table VI

Live-born infants of low birth weight
Total of 20. Rate 3.8 per cent

Weight	Died	Survived	Percentage mortality
Less than 2½ lb	—	—	—
2½ to 3½ lb	—	1 (NB)	—
3½ to 4½ lb	1 (NB)	2 (B). 3 (NB)	16.6
4½ to 5½ lb	—	6 (B). 7 NB)	—

Table VII

Foetal loss. Total number of babies born 494
British—85. Cypriot (local)—409

Stillbirth	Neonatal death	Total foetal loss
Booked 2. Unbooked 2.	Unbooked 1.	5
4 Stillbirths	Booked—British—Normal delivery—Hydrocephalous. BW 7 lb	
	Unbooked—Premature labour—compound presentation. Forceps under general anaesthetic. BW 3 lb 8 oz	
	Unbooked—Mixed APH—ARM—Normal delivery. BW 5 lb 6 oz	
	Booked (Cypriot)—Intra-uterine death at term—Breech presentation. BW 7 lb 4 oz	

Notes. Perinatal mortality 10/1000 total births. Perinatal mortality for unbooked cases 6/1000 total births. Perinatal mortality for booked cases 4/1000 total births.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Colonel T. W. Brown, Late R.A.M.C., for the use of his case records of patients under his care until March 1975, and to the various members of the administrative and nursing staff, for the verbal accounts of the emergency, and to Mrs. J. Webb for typing this manuscript.

Order of St. John of Jerusalem

Notification has been received from the Secretary-General of the Grand Priory in the British Realm of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem that the following officers have been advanced in the order or appointed Serving Officers of the Order.

Advanced to Commander

Lieutenant-General R. P. Bradshaw, Q.H.P., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., F.R.C.Path., M.F.C.M., D.T.M.&H.

Appointed Officer Brother

The Director-General of Army Medical Services has written a personal letter congratulating them on their appointment.

Brigadier N. G. Kirby, O.B.E., M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.S. Lieutenant-Colonel J. T. Coull, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.S. Major W. R. Short, M.B., Ch.B. Lieutenant-Colonel N. E. C. Bamford, T.D., M.B., Ch.B., R.A.M.C. (T.A.V.R.). Lieutenant-Colonel M. L. Fisher, T.D., M.B., B.S., M.R.C.G.P., D.Obst.R.C.O.G., R.A.M.C. (T.A.V.R.). Lieutenant-Colonel B. L. Ardill, T.D., M.D., F.R.C.S., R.A.M.C. (T.A.V.R.). Major I. M. Calder, T.D., M.B., Ch.B., D.M.J., F.R.M.S., R.A.M.C. (T.A.V.R.).

Appointed Officer Sister

Brigadier J. O. E. Moriarty, R.R.C., Q.H.N.S., Q.A.R.A.N.C.