



Society of Rural Physicians of Canada
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SESSION 364

Regionalized Perinatal Care - Does it Work? (2 hours)

Perinatal health care regionalization was embraced and implemented in Canada in the late 1960s and 1970s. Although such regionalization represents a rational approach for delivering health care, significant challenges continue to plague the delivery of perinatal health services. In rural and remote regions of Canada, the closure of small hospitals and the attrition of small-volume surgical programs has resulted in women having to travel long distances for antenatal care and childbirth. Other challenges to regionalized perinatal care include those due to geography, climate, emergency transport, organizational differences between provinces in the provision of care for pregnant women and newborn infants at different levels of perinatal risk, and the absence of a national program for evaluating and improving regionalization across Canada. There is a need to evaluate the structure, processes and outcomes of perinatal regionalization in order to encourage knowledge-based improvement. Participants in this workshop will review information on perinatal health care regionalization in Canada, especially as it pertains to rural maternity services. Regionalization will be examined in terms of its structure, processes and outcomes. A preliminary analysis of hospital deliveries recorded in the Discharge Abstract Database of the Canadian Institute for Health Information (2013-2015) will be used to inform the discussion.

At the end of the session, participants will be able to describe the structure, processes and outcomes of perinatal care regionalization in Canada with regard to: (i) Tiers of hospital service (including perinatal education) and (ii) Care provision in rural and remote communities.