



PROJECT JOEY – FREEDOM TO FEED

BACKGROUND

Project Joey is an initiative which has developed into a project to improve both patient experience and health and well-being of mum and baby. The infant feeding team lead became aware that babies born in the birthing centre would get uninterrupted skin to skin with their mum automatically after birth but babies born on the labour ward or in theatre did not always get this time.

There are both medical and well being benefits for mum and baby during these golden hours such as regulating baby's temperature, providing early immunity against infection, supporting maternal and new born well-being and providing an environment that encourages baby to feed.

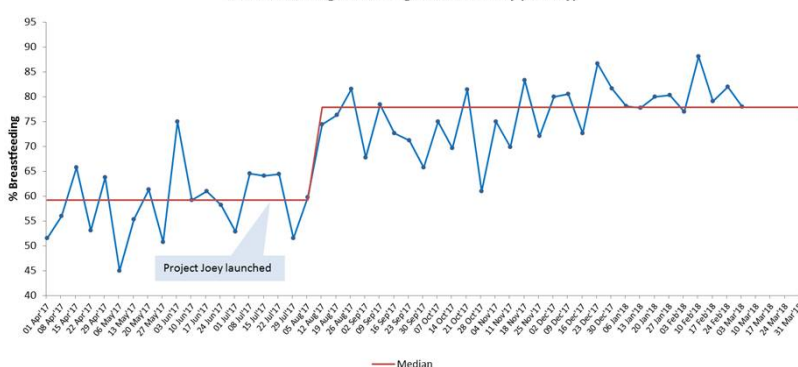
While skin to skin is the norm for women having baby's in the midwife led birthing centre, this is not the case on the labour ward and for women having C-sections. While there are scenarios where a baby has to be taken straight to NICU, a majority of women should have the option to have uninterrupted skin to skin for as long as they want to.

AIM: All women (medical issues aside) should have the chance to have uninterrupted skin to skin with their baby as soon after birth as possible, regardless of where they have had their baby (labour ward, theatre etc.)

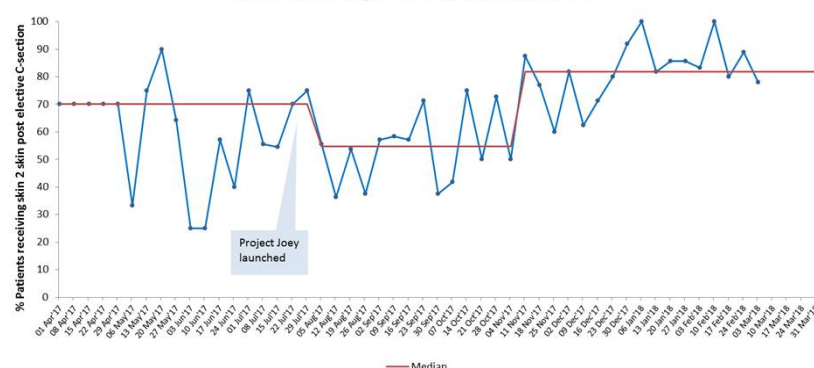
MEASURES

- Breast feeding rates for women at discharge to the community
- Percentage of elective C-sections having uninterrupted skin-to-skin before leaving theatre
- Attendance at the infant feeding classes

% Breastfeeding at discharge to community (weekly)



% Patients receiving skin 2 skin post elective C-section



THE CHANGES

A number of the changes are being implemented in community and theatres for elective C-sections.

In the community and at pre-assessments appointments, women are given information on the benefits of skin to skin and how delaying visitors in the first few hours can help both them and their partners build an early bond with their baby and encourage feeding within the first few hours. Women are encouraged to talk to their midwife at delivery of their wish for early skin to skin in theatre.

In theatre, the women's arm are left out of their gown pre-procedure, ECG leads are put on the back, the venflon is inserted in a way that allows the woman to move their arm freely and when baby is born minimal checks are completed to allow skin to skin to occur straight away. Vitamin K injection can be given while having skin to skin and other checks can be completed when the woman is moved.

When transferring a woman and their baby from labour ward / recovery to post natal ward, skin to skin can continue by transferring mum in a wheelchair with baby on her chest

OUTCOMES

The project has led to a multi-disciplinary approach being used to ensure that women have the choice to have uninterrupted skin-to-skin time with their baby regardless of where they deliver.

Throughout the period of the project, the rate of women breast feeding at discharge to the community has significantly increased, along with the percentage of women who are able to experience uninterrupted skin-to-skin time following an elective C-section.

The Maternity service has been re-accredited for the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative level 3, with Project Joey receiving particular note due to its impact on breast feeding rates at hospital discharge and its aim to provide the birthing centre experience regardless of where baby is delivered.



THE TEAM

Jo Wilding-Hillcoat, Infant Feeding Team Lead Midwife, and the Infant Feeding team

Richard George, Consultant Anaesthetist

Jan Thurgood, Joan Booker Ward Manager