

Worcestershire Obstetric Warning WOW Chart

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Key Amendments

Date	Amendments	Approved by

Introduction

The successive CEMACH and MBRACE Reports showed that the early warning signs of impending maternal collapse went unrecognised in many cases. The early detection of severe illness in mothers remains a challenge to all involved in their care. The relative rarity of such events combined with the normal changes in physiology associated with pregnancy and childbirth compounds the problem. Modified early warning scoring systems improve the detection of life threatening illness.

The routine use of WOW chart for all obstetric women will help in the more timely recognition, treatment and referral of women, who have, or are developing, a critical illness. The triggers (yellow and orange) are based on routine observations and are sensitive enough to detect subtle changes in a woman's physiology which will be reflected in a change of score should her condition be improving or deteriorating.

However, the detection of life threatening illness alone is of little value. It is the subsequent management that will alter the outcome.

Details of Guideline

What is a WOW chart?

WOW Chart: A4 size (WR1937) Observation chart on front and management plan section at the back

Enhanced care WOW chart: A3 size (WR1938). It has 4 parts.

1. WOW observation chart
2. Fluid Balance chart
3. Handover sheet
4. Investigations result record at the back

The observations are assigned white, yellow or orange colour. It is the yellow and orange score in addition to the overall clinical situation that will dictate the need to seek help/ advice of more experienced medical staff.

Aims of WOW chart:

- To facilitate timely recognition of the patients with established or impending critical illness
- To empower midwives and trainee medical staff to secure experienced help through the operation of a trigger threshold which, if reached, required mandatory attendance by a more experienced member of staff.

Although the majority of patients may benefit from utilisation of WOW charts the clinician's own clinical judgement dictates whether he or she requires the patient to be regularly scored.

However, WOW chart is not:

- A predictor of outcome
- A replacement for clinical judgement

When to use WOW chart?

WOW chart rely on the routine recording and charting of the physiological status of the patient. These are simple observations that can be performed by a midwife, doctor or other trained staff.

WOW charts should be used for all obstetric admissions in all clinical settings where observations are required based on clinical presentations. For antenatal and intrapartum women the WOW observations should be recorded in K2.

- All antenatal admissions
- Intrapartum period: Routine observations in labour will be recorded in a partogram in the yellow birth notes. If a woman requires enhanced care in labour enhanced care WOW chart should be used.
- All women requiring enhanced care in delivery suite (antenatal/intrapartum or postnatal) should have their observations recorded on enhanced care WOW chart
- All postnatal admissions
- It may also be necessary to assess a patient using the WOW chart prior to transferring them to another ward within the hospital or to an external healthcare provider.

If decision is made not to use a WOW chart in any of the above situation this should be clearly written in the medical records.

NOTE: WOW chart may not be indicated in certain situations including:

- Women attending the unit for counselling or discussion with the consultant who do not require any vital signs monitoring.
- Postnatal women who have been discharged but staying in the ward because of the baby.

Frequency of the observations recorded on WOW chart should be decided on an individual basis. In low risk women not requiring medical input this will be decided by the midwife looking after the woman. The required frequency of observations should be documented on the management plan at the back of WOW chart. The management plan should be updated as necessary and signed when the woman is reviewed.

In high dependency patients the frequency of observation required and the management plan should be documented in patient's case notes.

Not all patients will require every part of the WOW observation chart to be completed e.g. some observations are specific to postnatal period and will not be done antenatally.

How to respond to WOW score?

- If there is one orange and/or two yellow scores at any time on the WOW observation chart doctor should be contacted.

See appendix 2 for WOW pathway.

NOTE: Pain score is explained in appendix 1 below.

Appendix 1 : PAIN SCORE ON MOVEMENT No Pain	0
Mild pain which can be tolerated	1
Moderate pain causing some distress	2
Severe pain – worse pain possible	3

Appendix 2

WOW PATHWAY

