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Opting for a Cesarean: What Determines the Decision?

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Objective: This study aims at determining the impact of maternal, physician, and hospital characteristics on cesarean section rates in Beirut. Study Design: Data was collected through a cross sectional survey from a proportionate random sample of 600 women delivering in 10 hospitals in Beirut. Methods: Biavariate analysis (Chi square tests and tests of means) and logistic regression analysis were done. Results: A 35% incidence rate of cesarean section was detected among all deliveries. Cesarean delivery was significantly associated with multiple gestation, gestational age, number of previous deliveries, site of prenatal care (private clinic vs. health center), time of delivery (morning vs. evening), day of delivery (weekend vs. weekdays), and history of previous cesarean delivery. Conclusion: The high cesarean rate in Beirut raises serious questions concerning the health consequences on women as well as the economic effects on the health care system. This calls for imperative intervention at the level of public awareness and practice guideline enforcement.

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