AIMS For a better birth...

Quotation Corner

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Home birth is illegal...

Women are frequently misinformed about their right to give birth at home and, not uncommonly, they are told that it is illegal not to call a midwife or doctor; or that it is illegal to give birth without a midwife or doctor present and that the parents run the risk of a £5,000 fine.

One mother, receiving similar mis-information, emailed us to say:
'The midwife later admitted that she knew that giving birth at home, with or without a midwife was legal, she had only used this to force me to comply.'

The reality...

A woman cannot be prosecuted for birthing her own baby, and husbands, relatives, friends etc. cannot be prosecuted for attending a birth without a midwife or doctor. However, many have been wrongly threatened with prosecution under the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act, 1997. This act is designed to protect women from unqualified or unregistered people pretending to be midwives. To our knowledge, over the last twenty years, not one of these threats has been carried through.

For more see AIMS Journal 19 Number 3, page 10