AIMS For a better birth...

Closed Doors

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Recently the national newspapers carried the story of a woman who was sent home in labour, and when she tried to return to give birth her labour progressed so quickly that her baby was born in a car park. This situation is not that uncommon, and midwives are frequently called to attend 'born before arrival' births. What is worrying, however, is the current situation where maternity units have no staff available, so they close their doors to labouring women and either send them home or more often to an alternative unit many miles away.

AIMS is hearing that this is happening more and more regularly and yet there seems to be little awareness. This is an issue of short-staffing which impacts on women and midwives. The one-mother-one-midwife campaign would make this situation a rarity, as would a dramatic increase in support for home birth. Under situations where a unit is too short of staff to care for any more women they are probably already under such strain that they are being forced to compromise the safety of the women they are already caring for.

Anyone who has thoughts on the situation, or is concerned about units closing their doors can contact chair@aims.org.uk.