

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 July 2015 20:29
To: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Experience of maternity services

Dear [REDACTED]/Catherine,

I am very nervous about responding to this chain of emails as I am concerned that my views might not be well received. I thought I would summarise my thoughts and ask if you would be kind enough to give me some feedback?

Firstly, I don't think it's possible from the story to really determine what the appropriate risk classification for this woman is. To do this accurately (and to gain a full understanding of all the facts) it would be necessary to look at the medical records and speak to the clinicians involved.

That said, if the risk classification is wrong - this is clearly unacceptable.

The other possibility is that (perhaps for reasons not identified in the letter) the risk clarification is appropriate and the staff involved were acting in a way that they genuinely believed to be in the best interests of both mother and baby. In this case, my view is that it would be quite proper and professional for the staff involved in this woman's care to act to discourage this woman and her family from making a decision that could place her life, and importantly the life her unborn child at an elevated risk. (Of course - all of this must be in the context of a proper evidenced based review of the individual risk factors).

The idea that the NHS should support women in what ever choices they wish to make in childbirth, no matter how extreme the risk factors for the mother and baby are - is something that I think needs careful consideration.

What are the rights of the unborn baby in this situation?

Is it fair to put NHS staff in a situation whereby if a complication occurred, necessary medical help would not be available and thus there was a higher risk of a tragic avoidable outcome? Such circumstances would inevitably have a devastating impact on the staff involved.

Am I way off the mark with my views?

Kind Regards,
James