Section 1: Introduction

Victorian Perinatal Data Collection (VPDC) manual, version 3.0
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The Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity (CCOPMM) was established in 1962 under the Health Act 1958 (Vic) as the advisory body to the Minister of Health on maternal, perinatal and paediatric deaths. The Health Act was repealed on 1 January 2010 and replaced by the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.

The functions of CCOPMM are outlined in s. 46 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act and include the establishment of a perinatal data collection. The Victorian Perinatal Data Collection (VPDC) was established in 1982 as a population-based surveillance system. The purpose of this collection is to enable analysis of information about the health of mothers and babies to contribute to improvements in their health.

Data collected includes information on obstetric conditions, procedures and outcomes, neonatal morbidity and birth defects relating to every birth in Victoria of at least 20 weeks’ gestation or if gestation is unknown, at least 400 grams birth weight.

Information provided to the CCOPMM via the VPDC is privileged from access by any third party, including the courts. However, CCOPMM may, if it determines that it is in the public interest to do so, provide information to bodies specified in s. 41 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act.

The VPDC is used to populate the National Perinatal Minimum Dataset, but it also contains additional items to enable more detailed analysis on the health of mothers and babies in Victoria. All states and territories must comply with the minimum dataset and submit their data to the National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit (NPESU). CCOPMM provides the data for the NPESU under s. 41 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act.

Data is collected from hospitals, birth centres or homebirth practitioners either via a computerised hospital system or via the birth report form. Electronic data is submitted to the VPDC via a secure data exchange (SDE) portal.

This manual provides comprehensive information for hospitals and agencies on the VPDC, including data definitions and reporting requirements for all service types. The manual will be made available on the department’s website: http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ccopmm/vpdc/index.htm

Director
Quality, Safety and Patient Experience
Hospital and Health Service Performance
Manual content summary

The VPDC manual is divided into five sections. A detailed contents list appears at the beginning of each section. A broad overview of each section is provided below.

**Section 1  Introduction**
Provides an overview of the Victorian Perinatal Data Collection (VPDC) and its function, the uses of data collected, contact details, useful references and publications, and a list of acronyms used in this manual.

**Section 2  Concept and derived item definitions**
Provides definitions of concepts and derived items that contribute to the VPDC.

**Section 3  Data definitions**
Presents the specifications of data items collected through the VPDC. The data items are arranged in alphabetical order.

For hospitals with an electronic system, this manual describes the data as it should be submitted to the VPDC. The hospital’s software does not need to exactly replicate the VPDC system in all respects; however data must be formatted as specified for the VPDC.

**Section 4  Business rules**
Details the business rules that apply to reporting VPDC data. Tabular business rules provide a quick reference to edits relating to multiple data items.

**Section 5  Compilation and submission**
Provides the specifications for compiling a VPDC submission, including summary statistics and technical specifications.
Overview of the VPDC

The Victorian Perinatal Data Collection (VPDC) was established in 1982, by an amendment to the Health Act under the functions of the Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity (CCOPMM). The CCOPMM is the advisory body to the Minister of Health on maternal, perinatal and paediatric deaths.

The collection was established as a population-based surveillance system to collect and analyse information on, and in relation to, the health of mothers and babies in order to contribute to improvements in their health. The VPDC contains information on obstetric conditions, procedures and outcomes, neonatal morbidity and birth defects relating to every birth in Victoria of at least 20 weeks’ gestation, or, if gestation is unknown, at least 400 grams birth weight.

The majority of data items, of which there are nearly 140, comply with the National Perinatal Minimum Data Set, which are collected by all states and territories (all other states have a similar collection to the VPDC), and are sent to the National Perinatal Statistics Unit for the production of the annual report on Australia's mothers and babies.

The VPDC is responsible to the CCOPMM, which also reviews all perinatal, maternal and child (less than 18 years old) deaths. Information provided to the CCOPMM is privileged from access by any third party, including the courts.

However, CCOPMM may, if it determines that it is in the public interest to do so, provide information to bodies specified in s. 41 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act.

Functions of CCOPMM

The primary function of the VPDC is to provide data to CCOPMM. The functions of CCOPMM are outlined in s. 46 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act, and include:

- conducting study, research and analysis into the incidence and causes in Victoria of maternal deaths, stillbirths and the deaths of children
- conducting study, research and analysis into the incidence and causes of obstetric and paediatric morbidity
- collecting, studying, researching and interpreting information on and in relation to births in Victoria
- identifying and monitoring trends in respect of perinatal health including birth defects and disabilities
- providing information to the Secretary on the requirements for and planning of neonatal care units
- providing information for research into the epidemiology of perinatal health including birth defects and disabilities
- establishing and maintaining a register of birth defects and disabilities
- provide to health service providers—
  - information on obstetrics and paediatrics
  - strategies to improve obstetric and paediatric care.

Purpose of the data

The collections held by the CCOPMM, within the Clinical Councils Unit (CCU), are clinical data collections and include identified individual-level data provided by hospitals and individual medical practitioners. All public and private hospitals (including private day procedure centres) provide data to the CCOPMM as is required by the Public Health and Wellbeing Act.

The purpose of these data collections is to conduct study and research into the health of mothers and babies in Victoria, to support health service planning and develop government policy with the aim of preventing avoidable deaths and promoting healthy outcomes. The data collections also support
Victoria’s reporting obligations under the National Health and Hospitals Agreement and the National Health Agreement.

Data is also made available, on application, to researchers wanting to undertake research in areas of maternal and perinatal health.¹ The information collected through the VPDC is distributed to health services and practitioners by CCOPMM through a variety of publications, including *Births in Victoria*, hospital profiles and the CCOPMM annual report. The VPDC is also used to inform the planning of health services across Victoria and to meet reporting requirements to the NPESU.

**Notification to the VPDC**

The hospital, birthing centre (or private practitioner in cases of home birth) where the birth occurs is responsible for submitting the data to the VPDC as part of the mandatory reporting requirement.² The definition of a birth for this purpose means a birth or stillbirth that is required to be registered under the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996*.²

The midwife or practitioner attending each birth must supply all the required data to the VPDC either via the birth report form or the hospital’s electronic system. Due to the detailed nature of the information captured on in the VPDC, electronic submission is only permitted via a secure data exchange (SDE).

**Roles and information capture and flow**

The information below provides an outline of the sequence of data capture at the hospital and subsequent flow of information to the VPDC.

**At the hospital/agency**

The capture of information for the VPDC begins at the hospital/agency, generally when the mother is admitted. Registration and admission information is captured in the hospital’s patient administration system (PAS), and clinical details about the woman’s pregnancy and birth are captured in the hospital’s perinatal electronic system when she is admitted to the birthing suite. At the time of separation, the hospital/agency enters separation information on the PAS and the perinatal electronic system.

Each Victorian hospital/agency selects its own PAS and perinatal electronic system for collection of perinatal data from commercial software suppliers operating in Victoria. The hospital/agency is responsible for mapping or deriving (where necessary) the fields and codes used in their system to the fields and codes defined for the VPDC.

The information required by the VPDC is submitted electronically in an extract generated by the hospital’s perinatal electronic system as per the file structure specifications (refer to Section 5: Compilation and submission) via secure data exchange.

**At the Department of Health: Clinical Councils Unit**

The information submitted by hospitals/agencies is loaded into the VPDC database. The submission file and the records within the file are validated against the VPDC business rules and edits (refer to Section 4: Business rules).

Any records triggering edits will be directed back to the hospital/agency for correction or confirmation. Once the corrections or confirmations have been made by the hospital/agency, the records are resubmitted to the VPDC where the updated data will be loaded into the VPDC database.

The data collected in the VPDC partly populates the Victorian Birth Defects Register as well as records created by the CCOPMM to review all perinatal, maternal and child (less than 18 years old) deaths.

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¹ Identifying information cannot be provided for research purpose to third parties without the informed consent of the subject of the information (refer to Regulation 10 of Part 3, Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009)

² Refer to s. 48 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act
Software selection and minimum features

Hospitals/agencies should select software that has the ability to collect all data items required for submission to the VPDC, and can create a submission file that complies with the required file format detailed in Section 5: Compilation and submission. At a minimum, software must be able to:
• collect all data items required for the perinatal data collection, as specified in this manual
• provide user-selected values for all coded items – no data items should be transmitted with ‘default’ values
• provide values that can be mapped correctly to perinatal data collection code values
• create a transmission file in the required format
• be supported so that it can be updated when perinatal data collection specifications are modified
• send updated or corrected records
• send deletion records as a function of the software – that is, deletion records do not need to be created manually by the software supplier
• resend header dates (‘data submission identifier’) as a function of the software – that is, without the software supplier’s intervention to ‘roll back’ header dates
• perform at least a minimum level of editing to reduce errors produced during processing.

Data quality

Maintaining and improving data quality within the VPDC continues to be an important matter. The Department of Health has implemented a formal data quality review process. However, the maintenance of data quality is not the sole responsibility of the department and various quality evaluations should also be performed at the hospital/agency level.

At the hospital/agency:
• Data entry from the source will ensure optimum accuracy.
• The direct transmission of data in the correct format will avoid any further typographical errors.
• Hospital electronic systems should contain system edits that provide some level of validation upon data entry.
• Hospital electronic systems should incorporate the appropriate files that validate or translate data (for example, the files for ICD-10-AM and postcodes/localities).
• Hospitals/agencies should provide reference data to software vendors so that codes can be incorporated into software packages, allowing clinical information to be assigned the most appropriate ICD-10-AM code.

At the Department of Health:
• Extensive system validations (as specified by the Clinical Councils Unit) trigger edits for records containing invalid or inappropriate data or data requiring confirmation. These edits are further to any edits that may exist in a hospital’s/agency’s individual perinatal electronic system. A hospital/agency must take the appropriate action for all edit messages received.
• A hospital/agency that has changed or implemented new software should undertake a testing process. Test data is processed separately from normal processing. CCU staff review test runs and liaise with the hospital/agency and software supplier to correct any problems encountered. Once the hospital/agency has successfully completed the testing process, data transmission to the live system can begin. For details regarding submission of a test file, email the CCU at: perinatal.data@health.vic.gov.au.
VPDC update cycle

The VPDC is a legislated data collection; as such, only CCOPMM has the legal authority to make changes to the items collected. In the first four months of each calendar year, the CCU, on behalf of CCOPMM, calls for submissions for revisions to the VPDC to take effect from the following 1 January. CCOPMM may elect to make changes to the VPDC to provide data for a change in reporting requirements to the NPESU, to monitor a new policy or research areas of interest, or to follow changes to the National health data dictionary. External submissions received are provided to CCOPMM for consideration. Only those approved by CCOPMM proceed to implementation.

Implementation

Once submissions have been approved by CCOPMM they are outlined in a ‘proposals for revisions’ document, which is circulated to hospitals/agencies, software suppliers and others. All parties have the opportunity to submit comments and questions on the proposals. A forum may then be held to present the proposals in detail. Following this, a ‘specifications for revisions’ document is prepared providing full details of the changes.

Software suppliers should then revise software to be ready to use from 1 January. Hospitals/agencies that do not collect this information electronically will be provided with updated paper forms to reflect any changes. Hospitals/agencies will need to train staff in any changes to the VPDC.

Updates to reference data, such as updates to postcode/locality reference, may occur throughout the year to enable hospitals/agencies to submit accurate data. These updates will be published by the Clinical Councils Unit.

Accessing VPDC data

The release of identifiable information to any persons not listed in s. 41 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act is only permitted for the purpose of research. It requires the consent of the mother, the health service where the child was born and, where possible, the medical practitioner or midwife present at the birth. Non-identifiable information may be released by the CCOPMM under s. 10(2) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009.

Applications for the release of de-identified aggregate data can be submitted online to CCOPMM. Applications will be assessed against the mandatory criteria that the data requested is de-identified and statistical in nature, and that the release of the data satisfies current operational and legal considerations, including the Health Privacy Principles (HPPs) contained in the Health Records Act 2001. A public interest assessment will also be undertaken on a case-by-case basis to ensure consideration of all relevant circumstances.

Health services, after sending their information to the CCOPMM, can request access to that information. Health services’ requisition of data is usually to review practices and improve quality; there is a significant public interest in making this information available to them.

To submit a request for data, visit our website and complete the request for data form: http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ccopmm/forms.htm
VPDC policy on data manipulation

Manipulation of data extracts
In the normal course of business VPDC will not condone manipulation of any data extracts (for example, with Microsoft Excel, Notepad or any other data manipulation tool) that causes change in data values prior to submission to the department. The reasons for this are outlined below:

- It is expected that hospitals/agencies have a contractual arrangement with software vendors that obliges the vendors to provide software to hospitals/agencies that allows them to meet their reporting requirements. In effect, the vendor’s software should be capable of producing an extract in the format required by the VPDC. The VPDC acknowledges that any software may have the potential to extract data that can trigger ‘rejection’ edits. Software vendors and hospitals/agencies should work together to ensure that, where this occurs, data can be and is corrected via the hospital’s/agency’s relevant operational database, thereby eliminating the need for secondary data manipulation.
- Correcting errors in the extract, but not in the hospital’s operational database, can lead to a misrepresentation of the hospital’s true position.
- There is an audit requirement that data received by the VPDC is an accurate reflection of the hospital’s medicolegal system of record.

Responsibilities of the hospital
In situations where software does not allow the hospital to meet its reporting obligations, hospitals/agencies should, in the first instance, report the problem to their software vendor. The terms of the contract should ensure that these problems are addressed as a priority. In such cases the hospital/agency must:

- notify the VPDC in writing of the specific problem, including the affected fields
- specify the plan and timeframe negotiated between the hospital/agency and the vendor for the resolution of the problem
- receive written permission from the VPDC before proceeding with proposed data manipulation.

The VPDC will maintain a register of such occurrences. The written permission advice will include a date by which the VPDC expects the problem to be resolved. If the problem has not been resolved by this date hospitals/agencies need to advise the VPDC again of progress.

Responsibilities of the VPDC
In rare circumstances a hospital/agency may prefer the VPDC adjust an extract in order to address a specific data-quality issue. The VPDC will only consider this where:

- it believes that all other avenues have been exhausted
- the hospital/agency requests the changes in writing, confirming that it has made the changes to its own data (or indicating that this is not possible)
- the changes accurately reflect the hospital’s medicolegal system of record.

The VPDC will maintain a register of such occurrences.
Further information

Department of Health

Aboriginal health website

Hospital circulars website

Reference file data

Protection and use of your health care records
Provides information to patients about the privacy and confidentiality of their health care records, their rights to access their records, and the rules about the use and disposal of their records

Victorian hospital health information
Includes addresses and contact numbers

Maps and information

Clinical coding information

Legislation

Commonwealth
The following Commonwealth legislation is available online (under ‘Commonwealth’) at:
http://www.austlii.edu.au/
• National Health Act 1953
• Health Insurance Act 1973
• Privacy Act 1988

Victorian
The following Victorian Legislation is available online and is directly related to the VPDC:
• Public Health and Wellbeing Act, Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act

Other Victorian legislation of interest:
• Aged or Disabled Persons Care Act 1954
• Annual Reporting Act 1983
• Health Legislation (Amendment) Act 2003
• Health Records Act 2001
• Health Services (Governance and Accountability) Act 2004
• Health Services (Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centre) Regulations 2002
• Health Services Act 1988
• Victorian Hospital & Charities Commission (Fees) Regulations 1986
• Information Privacy Act 2000

Other useful publications and websites:

National Casemix and Classification Centre

See the ABS website: http://www.abs.gov.au/

HIMAA recruitment services
http://hima2.org.au/?q=workwebview

*National health data dictionary*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Contacts

For queries or comments relating to the VPDC please contact the Clinical Councils Unit: perinatal.data@health.vic.gov.au.
Symbols used in this manual

<  Less than
>  Greater than
≤  Less than or equal to
≥  Greater than or equal to
=  Equal to
Acronyms used in this manual

A/N antenatal
ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACHI Australian Classification of Health Intervention
ACHS Australian Council on Healthcare Standards
ACIR Australian Childhood Immunisation Register
ACT Australian Capital Territory
ARC Australian Resuscitation Council
ARM artificial rupture of membranes
ART artificial reproductive technology
ASCII American Standard Code for Information Interchange
ATSI Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
BBA born before arrival
BMI body mass index
BPA British Paediatric Association
CCOPMM Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity
CCU Clinical Councils Unit
CPD cephalopelvic disproportion
CS caesarean section
CSE combined spinal epidural
CTG cardiotocography
DH Department of Health
DOB date of birth
DRAM diastasis rectus abdominis
DTA Deep transverse arrest
DVA Department of Veterans’ Affairs
DVT deep vein thrombosis
ETOD electronic transfer of data
FDIU fetal death in-utero
GBS+ group B streptococcus positive
GIFT gamete intra-fallopian transfer
HDSS health data standards and systems
HDU high dependency unit
HELLP hemolysis, elevated liver enzymes and low platelet count
HIE hypoxic ischaemic encephalopathy
HITH hospital in the home
ICD-10-AM International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th revision, Australian modification
ICSI intracytoplasmic sperm injection
ICU intensive care unit
ID identification
IPPR intermittent positive pressure respiration
IUGR intrauterine growth retardation
IVF in vitro fertilisation
LFT liver function test
LNMP  last normal menstrual period
LOS   length of stay
MROP  manual removal of placenta
NAS   neonatal abstinence syndrome
NHDD  *National health data dictionary*
NICU  neonatal intensive care unit
NIPS  National Immunisation Program Schedule
NPESU National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit
PMSS  Perinatal Morbidity Statistics System
PROM  pre-labour rupture of membranes
ROM   rupture of membranes
TENS  transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation
VBAC  vaginal birth after caesarian