



## Higher Risk of Death for Babies Born at Night?

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There might be a greater risk for medical malpractice in childbirth when babies are born at night, a provocative but inconclusive study suggests.

In a study published in British Medical Journal's July 2010 issue, researchers from University of Cambridge and University of Glasgow report a slightly higher mortality rate of babies born outside of normal working hours, according to [NHS News](#) of the U.K.

The study analyzes Scotland's records of more than one million full-term, single baby births from 1985 to 2004. After adjusting several factors (e.g. socioeconomic and maternal age, among others), the researchers find that babies born over weekends or overnight during weekdays are three times

Patrick A. Malone  
Patrick Malone & Associates, P.C.  
1331 H Street N.W.  
Suite 902  
Washington, DC 20005

[pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com](mailto:pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com)  
[www.patrickmalonelaw.com](http://www.patrickmalonelaw.com)  
202-742-1500  
202-742-1515 (fax)

more likely to die of lack of oxygen than those born during normal working hours. However, the mortality rates in both groups are still very low: the mortality rate of those born during normal working hours is 4.2 out of 10,000 births; and that of babies born outside of the “safer” hours is 5.6 out of 10,000.

Authors of the study did not explore causes of the higher mortality rate for births outside of normal working hours, but cited fatigue and shortage of hospital staff as some of the possibilities. The BMJ article can be found [here](#).

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Patrick A. Malone  
Patrick Malone & Associates, P.C.  
1331 H Street N.W.  
Suite 902  
Washington, DC 20005

[pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com](mailto:pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com)  
[www.patrickmalonelaw.com](http://www.patrickmalonelaw.com)  
202-742-1500  
202-742-1515 (fax)