

3. FUTURE DEMANDS

A number of factors will influence future demand for these services.

- 3.1 Birth Numbers: An increase in birth numbers of the order of 11% between 1985 and 1995 is predicted for Avon. The additional 1,100 births will be divided between BHM, Southmead and Weston Hospitals. Similar increases in birth numbers are predicted for other Districts in the Region and neighbouring Regions.
- 3.2 Characteristics of the Neonate: The demand for special care and intensive care is influenced by the number of neonates of low (< 2,500 gms) and very low (< 1,500 gms) birthweight. No substantial change in the proportion of these neonates is predicted for the decade. Some low birthweight neonates and other neonates of normal birthweight will have congenital malformations and other disorders which demand special and intensive care. The incidence of congenital malformations and some genetically related disorders could show modest reductions if screening techniques and appropriate interventions improve.
- 3.3 Cardiological Investigations and Surgery: Bristol is a designated supra-regional centre for services for neonates and infants to the South Western Region and parts of South Wales. The estimated number of live births covered is 40,000 per annum. Services have surgical targets for children of all ages of 180 open procedures at the BRI and 70 closed procedures at BCH compared with present numbers of around 60 open and 70 closed procedures. Cardiological investigations are to increase from around 200 now to 400 per annum.
- The proportions of these targets which concern neonates are modest by current figures - 5% open, 20% closed and 25% cardiac catheterisations. There is a trend towards earlier investigation and surgery but not into the neonatal period significantly. The number of neonates requiring special and intensive care will increase in relation to the open surgery target at the BRI and associated investigations at BCH.
- 3.4 Neonatal Surgery: Some surgical procedures, other than cardiac, are required in the neonatal period and demand special and intensive care. There will be a pro rata increase in demand for neonatal surgery in relation to the increase in birth numbers and improved survival of intensively cared for neonates from out-of-Avon.
- 3.5 In Vitro Fertilisation: No development of services for IVF is proposed in the District or Regionally. The University Department of Obstetrics has a continuing research interest in sub-fertility. In vitro fertilisation related activities may maintain or increase demand for special and intensive care.
- 3.6 Equipment: Some aspects of neonatal care rely on items of sophisticated and expensive equipment. Reinvestment in and maintenance of equipment must have adequate provision.