



Group B Strep in Pregnancy & Babies Virtual Conference

17 May 2023



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**Our grateful thanks to
the Conference Scientific Organising Committee:**

Professor Philip Steer (Chair)
Dr Alison Bedford Russell
Dr Gopal Rao
Mrs Philippa Cox
Dr Sonali Kochhar
Jane Plumb

Welcome

On behalf of Group B Strep Support, I am thrilled to welcome you to the 2023 Group B Strep in Pregnancy & Babies Virtual Conference.

We are honoured to have such an esteemed line up for you, including the immediate past Presidents of both the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives, the incredible Carol J Baker and members of the charity's Medical Advisory Panel. Huge thanks to everyone, particularly the conference's Scientific Advisory Panel, the chairs and speakers for giving so much of their time to make this event brilliant.

This year's conference programme focuses on the critical importance of preventing group B Strep infection in babies, and on identifying and treating these infections,

exploring the latest research and approaches. We are excited to have such exceptional speakers sharing their insights and expertise. We will be closely monitoring the chat throughout the conference and will try to ensure that all the questions are addressed.

Despite significant progress made in the field, there is still a long way to go, and continued attention and investment are essential to tackle the burden of GBS disease. Thank you for taking part in this event, and we hope that you will find it informative, engaging and inspiring.

Jane Plumb MBE FRCOG FRSA

Chief Executive,
Group B Strep Support



Group B Strep Support

Founded in 1996, Group B Strep Support (GBSS) is the world's leading charity working to stop GBS infection in babies. The charity works in five main areas across the UK:

- Providing information and support to families affected by GBS.
- Raising awareness of GBS among new and expectant parents.
- Providing education services to health professionals so they are better able to prevent, spot and treat GBS infection in babies.
- Providing a voice for all those affected by GBS infection by lobbying politicians and other influential bodies to change NHS and Government policy around GBS.
- Supporting research into GBS, primarily through patient and public involvement.

Programme

Morning Session

- 09:00 – **Welcome and Introduction: Dr Edward Morris**, *Regional Medical Director, East of England, Immediate Past President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Chair of Trustees for Group B Strep Support.*
- 09:10 – **A family's experience: Sarah Doolin & Craig Pollard**
- 09:20 – **Current approaches to preventing group B Strep infection in babies, Jane Plumb MBE**, *Co-founder and Chief Executive of Group B Strep Support*
- 09:36 – **Update on invasive group B Strep surveillance data, England, Dr Theresa Lamagni**, *Senior Epidemiologist, Healthcare-Associated Infection & Antimicrobial Resistance, UKHSA*
- 09:56 – **Update on WHO Meningitis Roadmap and GBS, Dr Caroline Trotter**, *Honorary Epidemiologist at UKHSA & Director of the Cambridge-Africa Programme*
- 10:20 – **Panel Discussion: Chaired by Dr Edward Morris, with Jane Plumb MBE, Dr Theresa Lamagni, Dr Caroline Trotter and Sarah Doolin & Craig Pollard**
- 10:45 – 11:00 – BREAK**
- 11:00 – **Current status of GBS vaccine development, Professor Paul Heath**, *Professor of Paediatric Infectious Diseases, St George's University of London & St George's University Hospitals NHS Trust, London*
- 11:21 – **Group B Strep and preterm labour, stillbirth, and miscarriage, Professor Philip Steer**, *Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics at Imperial College. London. Past President of the British Association of Perinatal Medicine and the section of O&G of the Royal Society of Medicine. Chair of the Group B Strep Support Medical Advisory Panel.*
- 11:32 – **Late onset group B Strep infection, Dr Alberto Berardi**, *Head of Neonatal Intensive Care, Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Policlinico*
- 11:51 – **Short communication: Population genetics of Group B Streptococcus from maternal carriage in an ethnically diverse community in London, Dorota Jamrozy**, *Principal Bioinformatician, Wellcome Sanger Institute*
- 11:59 – **Short communication: Should the NHS Offer Universal Group B Streptococcus Screening to Pregnant Women? Mohid Malik**, *Medical Student, Imperial College London*
- 12:07 – **Panel Discussion: Chaired by Dr Edward Morris, with Professor Paul Heath, Professor Philip Steer, Dr Alberto Berardi and Dorota Jamrozy**
- 12:32 – **Close of Morning Session: Dr Edward Morris**
- 12:37 – 13:25 – LUNCH**

Afternoon Session

- 13:25 – **Introduction to Afternoon Session, Professor Philip Steer**, *Emeritus Professor of obstetrics at Imperial College. London. Past President of the British Association of Perinatal Medicine and the section of O&G of the Royal Society of Medicine. Chair of the Group B Strep Support Medical Advisory Panel.*
- 13:30 – **A family’s experience: Preya Vaja**
- 13:40 – **The GBS3 trial: an update, Professor Jane Daniels**, *Professor of Clinical Trials, University of Nottingham Clinical Trials Unit, Chief Investigator for the GBS3 trial, and Kerry Barker-Williams*, *GBS3 Lead Research Midwife, Nottingham Clinical Trials Unit*
- 13:51 – **Tests in pregnancy and labour for GBS – old and new technology, Dr Jim Gray**, *Consultant Microbiologist, Birmingham Women’s & Children’s NHS Foundation Trust*
- 14:15 – **GBS and what midwives need to know to answer parents’ questions, Dr Kathryn Gutteridge**, *Consultant Midwife, Psychotherapist, Past President of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) & Trustee of Group B Strep Support,*
- 14:40 – **Panel Discussion: Chaired by Professor Philip Steer, with Professor Jane Daniels, Dr Jim Gray, Dr Kathryn Gutteridge, Kerry Barker-Williams and Preya Vaja**
- 15:05 – 15:20 – **BREAK**
- 15:20 – **Short Communication: Group B Streptococcus antibodies and placental antibody transfer ratios among persons presenting for childbirth 2019-2021, Dustin Flannery**, *Neonatologist, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia*
- 15:29 – **Short Communication: Novel point-of-care biosensor for Group B Streptococcus testing, Emelie EC Alsheim**, *PhD Student, University of Bath*
- 15:37 – **Clinical recognition and treatment of GBS infection in babies, Dr Alison Bedford Russell**, *Neonatal co-Clinical Director at the Liverpool Neonatal Partnership. Member of the Group B Strep Support Medical Advisory Panel.*
- 15:56 – **Long term impact of GBS on babies and their families: findings from HIC and LMIC context, Dr Prama Paul**, *Research Fellow Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine*
- 16:13 – **Remaining challenges for GBS perinatal disease prevention, Dr Carol J Baker**, *Professor of pediatrics, McGovern Medical School, Houston, Texas. 2019 Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal recipient. Known as “the Godmother of Group B Strep prevention.” Global Vaccine Engagement Adviser to Group B Strep Support.*
- 16:40 – **Panel discussion: Chaired by Professor Philip Steer, with Dr Alison Bedford Russell, Dr Prama Paul, Dr Carol J Baker and Emelie Alsheim**
- 17:09 – 17:15 – **Summary and close: Professor Philip Steer**, *Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics at Imperial College. London. Past President of the British Association of Perinatal Medicine and the section of O&G of the Royal Society of Medicine. Chair of the Group B Strep Support Medical Advisory Panel.*

Speaker & Chair bios



Emelie Alsheim

PhD Student, University of Bath

Emelie has a BSc in Microbiology from Glasgow Caledonian University, MMedSc in Infection Biology from Uppsala University and is currently a PhD student in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Bath.

Talk Title: Novel point-of-care biosensor for Group B Streptococcus testing

Biosensor composed of lipids sensitive to GBS virulence factors has been tested on vaginal swabs from anonymous non-pregnant donors and show sensitivity and specificity for detecting vaginal carriage of GBS.



Dr Carol J Baker

Professor of Pediatrics, McGovern Medical School, Houston, Texas. 2019 Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal recipient. Also known as "the Godmother of Group B Strep prevention."

Carol is a professor of pediatrics at McGovern Medical School, Houston, Texas. Her work has focused on all aspects of perinatal group B streptococcal (GBS) infections with a focus on prevention through pregnancy screening and prophylaxis and maternal immunisation. Her discovery of the link between infant GBS disease and maternal immunity paved the way for routine GBS screening among pregnant women, reducing the rates of EOGBS disease in many countries by up to 80%. She continues to dedicate herself to preventing more GBS disease through maternal immunisation, with vaccine candidates currently in clinical trials.

Carol previously was professor of pediatrics and of molecular virology and microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, until 2018. She was Head of the Section of infectious diseases in the Department of Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine for 25 years. She is past chair of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (2009-2012). She is a past president of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and was a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases from 1997-2012.

In 1997, she was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award and in 2007 of the Distinguished Physician Award, each from the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society. She has been the recipient of several awards from the IDSA, the Mentor, the Society Citation for outstanding achievements in the field of Infectious Disease and in 2016 the Alexander Fleming Lifetime Achievement. In 2019. She received the Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal in recognition of her phenomenal research into group B Strep and is a member of the National Academy of Science

A widely published researcher in pediatrics and infectious diseases, she has authored or co-authored more than 500 articles, reviews, and book chapters.

Talk Title: Remaining challenges for GBS perinatal disease prevention



Kerry Barker-Williams

GBS3 Lead Research Midwife, University of Nottingham Clinical Trials Unit

Kerry was a clinical midwife for 12 years before taking up first research midwife role in 2011 and since then has worked on various trials in different trusts and gained a MSc in Clinical Research. She has been a member of the GBS3 team since May 2021 and is passionate about the positive effect research can have on clinical care.

Talk Title: The GBS3 trial: an update

Kerry will provide an update on the progress of the GBS3 trial. This is a cluster randomised trial comparing testing (either rapid intrapartum tests or enriched culture microbiological testing in late pregnancy) with the UK risk factor based approach. She will describe the uptake of testing and the next steps towards the final analysis.



Dr Alison Bedford Russell

Neonatal Clinical co-Director, Liverpool Neonatal Partnership. Member of the Group B Strep Support Medical Advisory Panel.

Alison has been a consultant neonatologist for 29 years and has had a strong interest in neonatal infection for all her paediatric working life. She is passionate about working together within healthcare teams and with parents to deliver the highest quality of care to babies.



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Talk Title: Clinical recognition and treatment of GBS infection in babies.

All the audience will be familiar with the clinical presentation of GBS. These will be briefly covered in this overview. The points will be made that listening to parents and hearing if they express concern about their baby is crucial; and that no algorithm or set of guidelines will substitute for good clinical acumen.



Dr Alberto Berardi

Head of Neonatal Intensive Care, Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Policlinico

Alberto is the head of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the University Hospital of Modena (Italy) He leads a research network for the surveillance of GBS in Italy.

Talk Title: Late-onset group B Strep infection



Prof Jane Daniels

Professor of Clinical Trials, University of Nottingham Clinical Trials Unit

Jane is the Chief Investigator for the GBS3 trial, a massive UK randomised trial of testing for GBS, and also led two previous clinical studies of rapid tests for GBS. She is a Professor of Clinical Trials at the University of Nottingham and has an outstanding reputation in women's health research.

Talk Title: The GBS3 trial: an update

Jane will provide an update on the progress of the GBS3 trial. This is a cluster randomised trial comparing testing (either rapid intrapartum tests or enriched culture microbiological testing in late pregnancy) with the UK risk factor based approach. She will describe the uptake of testing and the next steps towards the final analysis.



Sarah Doolin & Craig Pollard

Parents of Ezra Pollard who died in March 2022 after developing late onset Group B Strep infection.

Talk Title: A family's experience

Our son, Ezra Pollard, died due to late onset Group B Strep infection, which became sepsis with meningitis. He was just 19 days old. We share his story and our frustration of learning about GBS and infections signs only after he became poorly.



Dustin Flannery

Neonatologist, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Dr. Flannery is an attending neonatologist and clinical researcher at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA, United States.

Talk Title: Group B Streptococcus antibodies and placental antibody transfer ratios among persons presenting for childbirth 2019-2021

Multicenter prospective serosurveillance study of mothers and newborns to determine prevalence of naturally acquired serotype-specific GBS antibodies and dynamics of serotype-specific placental antibody transfer across gestation.



Dr Jim Gray

Consultant Microbiologist, Birmingham Women's & Children's NHS Foundation Trust

Jim was appointed Consultant Microbiologist at Birmingham Children's and Women's Hospitals in 1995. His research interests include group B Strep (working on several major GBS trials in the UK, including GBS2 and GBS3), point of care testing and paediatric antibiotic stewardship.

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References: **1.** Panther Fusion GBS Assay [Package Insert] AW-17997-001 Rev.003, San Diego CA: Hologic Inc, 2019. **2.** Shin JH and Pride DT. Comparison of Three Nucleic Acid Amplification Tests (NAATs) and Culture for Detection of Group B Streptococcus (GBS) from Enrichment Broth. *J Clin Microbiol*; 2019; JCM.01958-18.doi:10.1128/JCM.01958-18

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He has worked on several programmes with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), including the recent Neonatal Infection Guideline. He is an Expert Advisor for the British National Formulary for Children (BNF-C), Editor-in-Chief of The Journal of Hospital Infection and has editorial responsibilities with a number of other academic journals.

Jim was honoured in 2021 by the Birmingham Women's & Children's NHS Foundation Trust with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his work caring for children, young people, women, and their families. He has been at the forefront of the Trust's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Talk Title: Tests in pregnancy and labour for GBS – old and new technology

GBS screening can be performed by enrichment culture or the newer PCR method. In this presentation we will consider the pros and cons of both methods in the context of the National Screening Committee criteria for screening tests.



Dr Kathryn Gutteridge

Consultant Midwife, Psychotherapist, Past President of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) & Trustee of Group B Strep Support

Kathryn is recognised for her work as one of the first consultant midwives in the UK. She was elected as President of the Royal College of Midwives 2017-21. Kathryn is widely published in both peer-review journals and books and has presented internationally.

She has a long history of clinical care and advocacy for women in the NHS and a passion for women's issues and the importance of psychological, emotional, and mental well-being during childbirth.

She has worked in diverse settings including neonatal services and community midwifery and has been an expert advisor to both the RCM and the RCOG. In 2017 she was named 'Midwife of the Year' by the British Journal of Midwifery, and in 2021 was awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the RCM.

Talk Title: GBS and what midwives need to know to answer parents' questions



Prof Paul Heath

Professor of Paediatric Infectious Diseases, St George's University of London & St George's University Hospitals NHS Trust, London

Paul Heath is a Professor and Honorary Consultant in Paediatric Infectious Diseases at St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and St George's, University of London, where he is the Director of the Vaccine Institute. His research interests are in the epidemiology of vaccine

preventable diseases, in clinical vaccine trials, particularly in at-risk groups and in perinatal infections. He coordinates a European neonatal infection surveillance network and the UK Paediatric Vaccine Group (UKPVG). He is a member of the JCVI, Chair of the Research Committee of the European Society of Paediatric Infectious Diseases, NIHR Speciality Lead for Children's research for South London CRN and a member of the WHO GBS Working Group.

Talk Title: Update on group B Strep vaccine development

Administration of an effective GBS vaccine in pregnancy is likely to provide the optimal solution to the global burden of GBS in young infants. The current leading vaccine candidates are capsular polysaccharide (CPS)-protein conjugate vaccines and protein-based vaccines and both are now in pregnancy studies with Phase III and IV studies planned. Important issues remain, including their path to licensure, optimal timing of administration during pregnancy, number of doses required, co-administration with other vaccines and acceptability of this approach to healthcare workers and to the pregnant women they care for.

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Dorota Jamrozy

Principal Bioinformatician, Wellcome Sanger Institute

Dorota Jamrozy works at the Sanger Institute, and she is the project manager for the Juno study. Her background is in bacterial genomics and application of whole genome sequencing to study pathogen evolution.

Talk Title: Population genetics of Group B Streptococcus from maternal carriage in an ethnically diverse community in London

We need to better understand the GBS molecular epidemiology, in particular vaccine target prevalence, to determine vaccine coverage in different countries and regions. In this study we describe the population genetics of GBS isolates derived from maternal carriage in London, based on whole genome sequence analysis. We report the population structure, distribution of serotypes, alpha family protein genes and prevalence of AMR determinants. We also describe association between GBS population structure and maternal ethnicity.



Dr Theresa Lamagni

Senior Epidemiologist, Healthcare-Associated Infection & Antimicrobial Resistance, UK Health Security Agency

Theresa Lamagni is a Section Head in UKHSA and designated epidemiologist for the WHO Collaborating Centre for Streptococcal Diseases. As lead epidemiologist for streptococcal diseases, she oversees surveillance activities, outbreak and incident response and development of an evidence base to inform disease prevention programmes.

Talk Title: Update on invasive group B Strep surveillance data, England



Mohid Malik

Medical Student, Imperial College London

Mohid is a Fourth Year Medical Student intercalating in Global Health at Imperial College London. He has a particular interest in infectious diseases, population health and driving evidence-based policy change. He is very passionate about this field and would be keen to pursue more research opportunities in the future.

Talk Title: Should the NHS Offer Universal Group B Streptococcus Screening to Pregnant Women?

GBS screening is not regularly provided in the UK. This systematic review seeks to establish the cost-effectiveness and practicality of providing universal GBS screening to all pregnant women and determine whether it should be provided by the NHS.



Dr Edward Morris

Regional Medical Director, East of England, NHS England. Chair of Trustees, Group B Strep Support

Morning Chair

Eddie is the Regional Medical Director, East of England, NHS England. He is the Immediate Past President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and before that was Vice President for Clinical Quality (2016-2019) and Fellows' representative for the East of England on the RCOG's Council (2011-2016). He is also Honorary Senior Lecturer at the Medical School, University of East Anglia.

His main clinical interests include menopause, minimally invasive gynaecological surgery, and the advanced management of endometriosis. Former Chair of the British Menopause Society, he leads specialist menopause and tertiary endometriosis services in Norwich. Eddie is the co-editor of the Journal 'Post Reproductive Health' and has authored over 70 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and national documents.

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MinervaX is committed to the development of a vaccine to protect populations at risk of severe or life-threatening GBS infections. Clinical development is ongoing both in pregnant women as well as in older adults (including in older adults with certain co-morbidities).

MINERVAX





Ms Jane Plumb

Co-Founder and Chief Executive, Group B Strep Support

Jane Plumb co-founded Group B Strep Support with her husband Robert in 1996 after their middle child died from group B Strep infection, and is its Chief Executive.

Jane is also the RCOG's Women's Voices Lead, and a member of the WHO's Extended Technical Taskforce on Defeating Meningitis By 2030, chairs the Council for the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations and is a Meningitis Research Foundation trustee.

Jane was a member of the Department of Health's priority-setting workshops for GBS research in 2015/6, and has sat on several NICE guideline committees. Jane is involved in many group B Strep research projects, co-leading PPI for the GBS3 trial. Jane was awarded an MBE in 2012 for services to child health, Fellowship of the RSA in 2020, and Fellowship Honoris Causa by the RCOG in 2021.

Talk Title: Current approaches to preventing group B Strep infection in babies



Dr Proma Paul

Assistant Professor, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Proma is Assistant Professor at LSHTM. She works on various maternal and child health projects, with a focus on outcomes related to perinatal infections.

Talk Title: Long term impact of GBS on babies and their families: findings from HIC and LMIC context

Invasive Group B Streptococcus (iGBS) is associated with disability that may affect a child's ability to thrive later in life, leading to substantial demands on parental caregiving and chronic stress. This presentation will explore the the long-term consequences of iGBS disease in early infancy, as well as the subsequent maternal mortality and psychiatric risk among mothers of children with iGBS.



Prof Philip Steer

Emeritus Professor of obstetrics at Imperial College London, and Editor Emeritus of BJOG. An Editor of 'High Risk Pregnancy – Management Options' (Cambridge University Press) with the 6th edition now in preparation. Previously President of the British Association of Perinatal Medicine and President of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the Royal Society of Medicine. Chair of the Group B Strep Support Medical Advisory Panel.

He was a member of the RCOG Group B Streptococcal Prevention Guidelines Committee that produced the RCOG's 2017 group B Strep guidelines.

Afternoon Chair

Talk Title: **Group B Strep and preterm labour, stillbirth, and miscarriage**

Globally, about 15 million babies are born preterm annually, a major cause of perinatal mortality and long-term disability. However, antenatal antibiotic prophylaxis in women carrying *Streptococcus agalactiae* (group B strep, GBS) appears not to reduce rates of preterm labour. Antibiotic prophylaxis can prevent intrapartum stillbirths linked with GBS infection, however, GBS as a cause of prelabour stillbirth is extremely rare and currently not preventable. Vaccines hold promise.



Dr Caroline Trotter

Professor of Global Health, University of Cambridge

Caroline Trotter is Professor of Global Health at the University of Cambridge and Director of the Vaccine Impact Modelling Consortium at Imperial College London. She is a member of the WHO Technical Taskforce for Defeating Meningitis by 2030, member of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and chair of the Meningitis Research Foundation Scientific Advisory Panel.

Talk Title: **Update on WHO Meningitis Roadmap and GBS**



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The World Health Organisation, with global partners and experts involved in meningitis prevention and control, led the development of a global road map that sets forth a vision and roadmap to defeat meningitis by 2030. This talk will give an update about how the roadmap is progressing, with a particular emphasis on GBS.



Preya Vaja

Customer Insight Manger.

Preya is a Customer Insight Manger, wife to husband Birju, and mother of two healthy daughters Amba (four), Uma (two).

Talk Title: A family's experience

I will be talking about my personal experience and the devastating effects of GBS infection on my daughter Uma.



**Proud to be a longstanding supporter of
Group B Strep Support (GBSS)**

We're committed to supporting the valuable work of GBSS by raising awareness and campaigning for testing during pregnancy to prevent the early onset of GBS infection.

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Anna:
“If I’d known about
group B Strep,
we wouldn’t have
had to go through what
we did.”

These smiles hide heartbreak.

Mum Anna and baby Minnie were seriously ill with group B Strep sepsis after Minnie’s birth. Both are now fighting fit, but it was touch and go for a while.

July marks GBS Awareness Month, follow us on social media.



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MinervaX is developing a group B Strep vaccine based on a family of surface proteins found on 99.7% of clinical isolates. It is highly immunogenic, resulting in long-lasting high titres of functionally active antibodies. The vaccine has been tested in 300 healthy adult women and is currently being tested in pregnant women in Africa.

Contact: Dr Per Fischer, CEO
Email: pbf@minervax.com
Address: Ole Maaloes Vej 3, 2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark
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Website: www.pfizer.co.uk

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We understand the importance for both families and healthcare professionals of having access to good quality information about group B Strep. We're committed to supporting the valuable work of Group B Strep Support by raising awareness, and helping to work towards better outcomes for all.

Contact: Richard Kayser, Partner
Email: richard.kayser@irwinmitchell.com
Website: www.irwinmitchell.com



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July is Group B Strep Awareness Month

Group B Strep infection in newborn babies can usually be prevented.

Find out more: gbss.org.uk



Group B Strep Support



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