

## 75pc of hospital's babies not planned

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Some 75 per cent of babies born at Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital last year were "accidents", according to a leading obstetrician.

Consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology at the hospital, Dr Lam Siu-keung, said only one-quarter of the 2,000 deliveries had resulted from planned pregnancies.

The sudden changes in lifestyle and financial stresses brought about by an unplanned baby could induce anxiety, causing some parents to take out their frustration or resentment on the new child, he said.

"Unmarried teenage mothers and people who have delivered babies of the 'wrong' sex are likely to resent the child," Dr Lam said.

"Some people have no idea about what will be involved in having children," he said.

"They delayed seeing the doctors after they were diagnosed pregnant."

Figures from the Department of Health show that 176 women requested post-coital contraceptive pills after the failure of condoms last year.

In 1993 the figure was 147 and in 1994 it reached 190.

But Dr Lam said most married couples who kept their unplanned babies, needed to prepare mentally rather than physically for the changes that would occur in their lives.

Couples would need to be more accommodating to each other because an extra responsibility could strain their finances and their sex lives, he said.

Dr Lam will be speaking during an ante-natal seminar to be held by Caritas' family service next month to help those who want to be parents.