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Fatal bleed: Rana Abdelkarim, who spoke little English, died after induced labour

NHS interpreting failures 'caused 80 babies to die'

FAILURES in NHS interpreting services were linked to at least 80 babies dying or suffering serious brain injuries, an investigation has found.

The BBC's File On 4 programme revealed 'poorly managed' language services in the NHS are leading to abuse, misdiagnosis and, in some cases, death.

Some staff turned to online tools such as Google Translate in the absence of qualified professionals to deliver news to non-English speaking patients.

Rana Abdelkarim and husband Modar Mohammednour arrived in England after fleeing conflict in Sudan, both speaking little English, the programme heard.

Ms Abdelkarim was called to attend a maternity unit but her husband was unaware this was to have her labour induced.

'I heard this "induce" but I don't know what it means,' he said.

She suffered a fatal bleed after giving birth to their daughter at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital in March 2021.

'They called me and said, "we tried to keep her alive but she's passed away";

by **STORM NEWTON**

the dad-of-two said. Mr Mohammednour, who named their younger daughter after her mother, Rana, said better interpreting services would have helped them understand what was happening.

Following a freedom of information request by the BBC, the Care Quality Commission reviewed 2,607 cases of babies dying or suffering serious brain injuries in the first week of life between 2018 and 2022. Of these, 80 were linked to interpretation or communication problems due to language difficulties.

Mike Orlov, executive director of the National Register of Public Service Interpreters, told the BBC the level of qualifications in the profession varies hugely, making standards 'extremely patchy'.

NHS England said it is completing a review 'to identify if and how we can support improvements in the commissioning and delivery of translation services'.

File On 4: Lost In Translation will air on Radio 4 on Thursday at 8pm.

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