Effects of Waterbirth on Laboring Women

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Effects of Waterbirth on Laboring Women

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Abstract

Objective: To explore the differences between waterbirth and the overall reduction of pain during labor.

Design: Quasi-experimental, Exploratory

Setting: Hays Medical Center in rural, western Kansas

Participants: Laboring mothers at Hays Medical Center, Center for Women’s Health

Results/Conclusions: Pending results and data collection

Introduction

Considering that babies spend nine months floating in the warm and wet comfort of their mother’s womb, a water birth is a natural way of coming into the world. While traditional labor remains the most common method of childbirth, McCauley et al. (2019) states, half of all healthcare providers consider labor pain as ‘natural’ and necessary for birth. Although water birth is gaining popularity, many still question the risks and benefits of this process and if it is truly the safest, least painful method of delivery. According to Cluett (2018), evidence indicates that laboring and giving birth in water is emerging as a means of facilitating women to have a greater sense of control and comfort during childbirth. The buoyancy that laboring in water offers, means of facilitating women to have a greater sense of control and more in control during labor.

Theory of Holistic Comfort (Koehn, 2001). This theory is based on complementary and alternative therapies that enhance the positive outcome of the childbirth experience (Koehn, 2015). Utilizing Kolcaba’s theory, patients will have more comfort and less pain due to the soothing environment that allows women to feel calm and more in control during labor.

Methodology

Research Design/Interventions

IV: Waterbirth

Dv: Perceived laboring pain on 1 to 10 Visual Analog Scale (VAS)

Intervention: Mothers will choose between natural delivery and waterbirth after being informed of the study and consent is given. Those selecting waterbirth will also not obtain an epidural or other means of analgesia during labor and birth.

Proposed Research Question:

Does waterbirth decrease pain in laboring women compared to natural birth?

Literature Sources

Research suggests that waterbirth can be clinically effective as a means to reduce the intensity of pain during normal physiological injection to control pain and will deliver without the aid of water. Those selecting waterbirth will also not obtain an epidural or other means of analgesia and will have a pool of water to sit in as they labor.

Sample

Women choosing waterbirth and women choosing natural birth at Hays Medical Center, Center for Women’s Health

Ethical Considerations

Pending IRB Full Review at Hays Medical Center, Fort Hays State Nursing Department, Fort Hays State University.

Data Collection

n= 100

- 50 mothers selecting waterbirth with no radical analgesia during labor

- 50 mothers selecting natural birth with no radical analgesia during labor

- 100 mothers fulfilling inclusion criteria will be enrolled from Hays Medical Center, Center for Women’s Health unit.

Discussion

Implications For Nursing

Understanding that waterbirth as a method of delivery is found to positively impact the pain levels experienced by the participant, further encouragement should be implemented when discussing laboring methods upon discovery of pregnancy. In addition, nursing staff and midwives should be updated with laboring options to inform mothers.

Conclusion

Pending results and data collection. Other studies have found that implementing waterbirth has positively influenced the laboring mother by decreasing pain and lowering the need of analgesics. For future research, it is recommended that this study be conducted on a larger scale in many more diverse, urban Centers for Women’s Health, so that these findings can be applied to a greater population.

References


McCauley, M., Actis Danna, V., Mrema, D., & Van Den Broek, N. (2018). “We know it’s labour pain, we don’t do anything” healthcare providers’ knowledge and attitudes regarding the provision of pain relief during labor and childbirth in Malawi. PLoS One. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0196476


Key Terms:

Water birth: Neonate is born under the water (Cluett et al., 2018)

Natural birth: Vaginal delivery with no epidural (Cluett et al., 2018)

Labor Pain: Discomfort caused by contractions of the muscles of the uterus and by pressure on the cervix (Ben-Joseph, 2018)