**Tatum Zotti u3213069**

**Hold the epidural! Evaluating the enablers and barriers for midwives in the use of non-pharmacological pain relief in labour.**

Over 75% of women in Australia use pharmacological and non-pharmacological pain relief in labour. Non-pharmacological measures such as massage, water therapy and acupressure have proven benefits. Using massage in labour has been shown to decrease pain and release oxytocin, while water therapy increases relaxation and endorphin production. Acupressure reduces stress and tension while with the further benefits being less intense pain and less anxiety. Most importantly, overall, these techniques improve women’s satisfaction in labour.

Pharmacological measures are also available. However, women receiving an epidural are twice as likely to report feeling dissatisfied with their birth. The use of epidural analgesia is also linked to a reduction of spontaneous birth, increased instrumental deliveries, episiotomies, and labour dystocia as well as negatively contributing to a woman’s sense of control and satisfaction during labour.

International, national, and local recommendations include using nonpharmacological techniques as the first line of management. Anecdotal evidence suggests that locally, Birth Centre midwives may more commonly use these practices than Birth Suite midwives, despite both following the same practice guideline.

A comprehensive evaluation of the current labour and birth policy will examine how it is being interpreted, identify the enablers and barriers in both birthing settings and help determine strategies to promote standardised practice. The evaluation will inform any necessary redevelopment of the policy. The revised policy will be disseminated using education and in-services. Evaluation of the policy’s implementation ‘success’ using birthing data, staff confidence and maternal satisfaction will be undertaken at regular timepoints.

**References:**

Andrew, M. S., Selvaratnam, R. J., Davies-Tuck, M., Howland, K., & Davey, M. (2022). The association between intrapartum interventions and immediate and ongoing breastfeeding outcomes: An Australian retrospective population-based cohort study. International Breastfeeding Journal, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-022-00492-7>

Chen, Y., Xiang, X., Chin, K. H., Gao, J., Wu, J., Lao, L., & Chen, H. (2020). Acupressure for labor pain management: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. Acupuncture in Medicine, 39(4), 243-252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0964528420946044>

Czech, I., Fuchs, P., Fuchs, A., Lorek, M., Tobolska-Lorek, D., Drosdzol-Cop, A., & Sikora, J. (2018). Pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods of labour pain relief—Establishment of effectiveness and comparison. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 15(12), 2792. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15122792>

Feeley, F., Cooper, M., & Burns, E. (2021). A systematic meta-thematic synthesis to examine the views and experiences of women following water immersion during labour and waterbirth. Journal of Advanced Nursing. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14720>

Gallo, R. B., Santana, L. S., Marcolin, A. C., Duarte, G., & Quintana, S. M. (2018). Sequential application of non-pharmacological interventions reduces the severity of labour pain, delays use of pharmacological analgesia, and improves some obstetric outcomes: A randomised trial. Journal of Physiotherapy, 64(1), 33-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jphys.2017.11.014>

Hosseni, S. F., Pilevarzadeh, M., & Vazirinasab, H. (2016). Non-pharmacological strategies on pain relief during labor. Biosciences, Biotechnology Research Asia, 13(2), 701-706. <https://doi.org/10.13005/bbra/2087>

Levett, K. M., Smith, C. A., Bensoussan, A., & Dahlen, H. G. (2016). Complementary therapies for labour and birth study: A randomised controlled trial of antenatal integrative medicine for pain management in labour. BMJ Open, 6(7), e010691. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2015-010691>

Maghalian, M., Kamalifard, M., Hassanzadeh, R., & Mirghafourvand, M. (2022). The effect of massage on childbirth satisfaction: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Advances in Integrative Medicine, 9(3), 151-158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aimed.2022.05.002>

Newnham, E. C., Moran, P. S., Begley, C. M., Carroll, M., & Daly, D. (2021). Comparison of labour and birth outcomes between nulliparous women who used epidural analgesia in labour and those who did not: A prospective cohort study. Women and Birth, 34(5), e435-e441. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2020.09.001>

Thomson, G., Feeley, C., Moran, V. H., Downe, S., & Oladapo, O. T. (2019). Women’s experiences of pharmacological and non-pharmacological pain relief methods for labour and childbirth: A qualitative systematic review. Reproductive Health, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-019-0735-4>