



Service Priorities and Programmes
Electronic Presentations

Convention ID: 179

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Birthball exercise on Labor Pain Management

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Keywords:

Exercise
Labor pain
Pain management
Pregnancy
Parturition

Introduction

Pain associated with labor has been described as one of the most intense forms of pain that can be experienced. Effective pain management is crucial in the labor process. Modern trend of labour pain management is towards non-pharmaceutical methods. By introducing birth ball exercise in the labor process may reduce labor pain. Hence, it may decrease the consumption of intramuscular pethidine.

Objectives

This service review was to evaluate the efficacy of birthball exercise program conducted by physiotherapists on pain relief, psychological care and facilitation of labor process at labor ward in Kwong Wah Hospital.

Methodology

Chinese women admitted to labor ward from April to August 2012 for spontaneous vaginal delivery were recruited in the program. Physiotherapists taught birthball exercise in group or individually for 30 minutes. Labor pain intensity, back pain intensity, frequency of labor pain, stress and anxiety level were captured before and after birthball exercise. Most of the parameters were measured using self-reported visual analogue scales (VASs). After exercise session, physiotherapist measured women satisfaction level. Midwives recorded pethidine usage.

Result

A total of 203 pregnant women participated in this program. 181 women were in 'latent phase' group whereas 22 women were categorized as 'without labor pain' group. In both groups, there were statistical and clinical significant difference in low back pain level, stress and anxiety level ($p < 0.05$). In latent phase group, it demonstrated significant decrease in labor pain and increase in frequency of labor pain. Mean satisfaction scores were high with VAS score > 8.2 in both groups. Pethidine usage showed a further decrease trend from the past 2 years with 6.4% in this program. The percentage in this group of women is less than that in the total women undergoing spontaneous vaginal delivery (SVD) in the labor ward in Kwong Wah Hospital (8.01%).

Birthball exercise could be an alternative means of pain relief in labor ward for relieving back pain, labour pain, decreasing anxiety level and promoting relaxation. It could decrease the pethidine consumption in laboring women. This collaborative program was highly appreciated at labor ward in Kwong Wah Hospital.