

STUDY PROTOCOL

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Comparing the effect of auricular acupressure and body acupressure on pain and duration of the first stage of labor: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

Zainab Alimoradi¹, Farideh Kazemi^{2*} , Mahboubeh Valiani³ and Maryam Gorji⁴

Abstract

Background: Labor pain is one of the leading causes of fear of childbirth. Acupressure is a non-pharmacological pain relief method that has shown promising results in relieving this pain. The present study is designed to compare the effects of body acupressure at multiple points and auricular acupressure on the pain and duration of labor.

Methods/design: In a randomized controlled trial, 90 primigravida women who attend for childbirth will be randomly assigned to one of three groups (intervention groups of either body acupressure or auricular acupressure; control, consisting of routine care). Computer-generated six-block randomization techniques will be used to determine the allocation sequence with a 1:1:1 ratio. To hide the allocation, the type of intervention will be written according to the generated sequence and put in opaque envelopes; these as well as questionnaires will be encoded. The pain score for all participants will be measured at the peak uterine contraction at 4-cm cervical dilation and at 10-cm dilation based on a visual analog scale (VAS). The duration of the active phase of labor in these groups will be recorded too. Data will be imported into SPSS-16 software. First, normality of the data distribution will be investigated. To compare labor duration among the research groups, ANOVA will be used, which will be followed, in case of significance, by the Scheffe post hoc test. Furthermore, Chi-squared test will be used to compare the categorized demographic variables and ANOVA or Kruskal–Wallis tests will be used to compare the quantitative variables in the studied groups. A significance level of 0.05 is considered significant.

Discussion: In this study the effect of auricular acupressure and body acupressure on pain and duration of first stage of labor will be compared.

Trial registration: Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials, [IRCT20180218038789N1](https://www.irct.ir/IRCT20180218038789N1). Registered 2018-03-04; pre result.

Keywords: Auricular acupressure, Body acupressure, Labor pain, Labor duration

* Correspondence: Faridehkazemi21@yahoo.com

²Department of midwifery, Mother & Child Care Research Center, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Hamadan University of Medical Science, Front of Mardom Park, Shahid Fahmideh blv., Hamadan 65178-38698, Iran
Full list of author information is available at the end of the article



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