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The Effects of Aromatherapy on Laboring Mothers



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Abstract

Objective: Evaluate the effectiveness of aromatherapy to decrease pain and anxiety in labouring mothers compared to the pharmacological route

Design: Non-experimental, comparative

Setting: HaysMed OB floor

Participants: Consenting mothers who are transitioning to labor

Results/conclusions: Pending results and data collection

Introduction

Painful experience a mom may go through (Patel, 2018). "Pain is an unavoidable reality of labor and the most noticeable determinant of the labor experience" (Tabatabaeichehr and Mortazavi 2020). With pain being an inevitable part of labor, having multiple different sources of pain relief can overall reduce the amount of pain and anxiety in the laboring mother. In addition to the traditional pharmacological approach for pain and anxiety relief, an alternative approach is to use aromatherapy in laboring women. This approach allows women to be able to use therapies such as essential oils, massage, music, imagery, yoga, heat and cold therapy, meditation and praying (Patel, 2018). All these therapies allow the laboring women to have full control over how her pain is being managed and to potentially reduce her anxiety. Ultimately the laboring mother will choose the pain relief method that works best for her. However, as nurses it is important to educate about the different options available for the laboring mother besides pharmacological pain relief methods.

Purpose

To decrease pain and anxiety levels by using both pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods in laboring women.

Key Terms

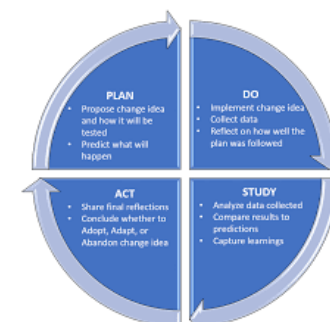
Aromatherapy: A type of complementary and alternative medicine that uses plant oils that give off strong pleasant aromas (smells) to promote relaxation, a sense of well-being, and healing (National Cancer Institute, 2011).

Pharmacologic: The study of the origin, chemistry, and uses of drugs and their effects on the body (National Cancer Institute, 2011).

Non-pharmacologic: Any intervention intended to improve the health or the well-being of individuals that do not involve the use of any drugs or medicine (National Cancer Institute, 2022).

Framework

With the Plan, Do, Study, Act model, (PDSA) this will ultimately give the laboring mother multiple options for pain relief that best fits her. This provides framework for the laboring mothers to give the choices that ultimately fit them, to assess better outcomes.



Methodology

Research Design/Interventions

RD: Quasi-experimental, qualitative, comparative

IV: Pharmacologic method vs. aromatherapy for pain management.

DV: Pain and anxiety management

Proposed Research Question

In laboring women, how does aromatherapy compared to the standard pharmacologic methods affect pain and anxiety within the labor and delivery process?

Literature Sources

A total of 33 studies were verified to meet our inclusion criteria. Most of the included studies were conducted in Iran. Aromatherapy was applied using inhalation, massage, footbath, birthing pool, acupuncture, and compress. The most popularly used essential oil in the studies was lavender (13 studies), either as a single essential oil or in a combination with other essential oils. Most included studies confirmed the positive effect of aromatherapy in reducing labor pain and anxiety (Tabatabaeichehr and Mortazavi 2020).

Sample

Laboring mothers who are full term approaching the transition to labor at Hays Medical Center in Hays, Kansas.

Ethical Considerations

Seeking full review from Hays Medical Center and Fort Hays State Department of Nursing in Hays, Kansas.

Data Collection

N= 40

N= 20 laboring mothers who choose pharmacologic methods for pain and anxiety relief .

N= 20 laboring mothers who choose aromatherapy methods for pain and anxiety relief.

Analyzing the statistics over the last six months, this study plans to compare the differences in pain and anxiety management and how it affects the laboring mothers birthing process. This data will be collected postpartum after caring for these mothers during a very intimate time in their life, in order to gather data and analyze what is the best aromatherapy option for these mothers.



(Amor, 2021)

Results/Findings

Projected Data Analysis Method

This study will use an independent t-test technique to analyze the effects of aromatherapy on laboring mothers who are full term in Hays, Kansas.



(Smith, 2023)

Literature Findings

(Tabatabaeichehr and Mortazavi 2020) studies concluded that aromatherapy has decreased laboring woman's pain and anxiety. Out of 33 different studies 27 of them stated that there was a significant decrease when aromatherapy was being used. This study summarizes that mothers who use aromatherapy have a decrease in their pain and anxiety. The most used essential oil was lavender. This relaxed the mother which decreased her stress levels and ended in lower pain and anxiety levels (Tabatabaeichehr and Mortazavi 2020).



(VanAlstyne, 2018)

Discussion

Implications For Nursing

If findings demonstrate that there are multiple resources available for laboring mothers, then this information needs to be prompted out there for this specific group. Allowing mothers to be aware of multiple options to go about their laboring process will end up in the best interest of care that nurses can provide. Nurses can then educate their patients on a holistic approach compared to the pharmacological approach to reduce pain and anxiety during their labor experience. Aromatherapy can reduce their stress levels which can lead to a decrease in their pain and anxiety levels (Patel, S 2018).

Conclusion

Pending results and data collection. Studies have shown those who use aromatherapy have a decrease in their pain and anxiety during their labouring process.

Future research should include implementing the knowledge to healthcare workers about aromatherapy. This is important so we can educate our patients on different methods to go about their pain and anxiety, ultimately ending in their choosing. Studies should continue to test the effectiveness of aromatherapy compared to pharmacological routes to decrease anxiety and pain levels in labouring mothers.

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