



AWARENESS AND PREFERENCE OF ALTERNATIVE BIRTHING POSITIONS AMONG MULTIPAROUS WOMEN: A HOSPITAL-BASED OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

Dr. Bakul Kulkarni

Junior Resident, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Dr. BVP Rural Medical College, PIMS, Loni.

Dr. Sai Borawake

Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Dr. BVP Rural Medical College, PIMS, Loni.

Dr. V. B. Bangal

HOD and Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
Dr. BVP Rural Medical College, PIMS, Loni

ABSTRACT

A satisfying childbirth experience is influenced by women's self-control, labour pain perception, expectations and health care support. Childbirth medicalization has reduced the parturient opportunity to labour and deliver in position, of her choice, constricting her to assume the recumbent one. The aim of this study was to educate the pregnant women during antenatal period about the alternative birthing positions and take their choice on desired position for delivery. A short study was conducted in Pravara Rural Hospital, Loni which is a tertiary care teaching hospital in Central India. In this study 600 multiparous pregnant women in antenatal OPD were shown images of different birthing positions and were explained about the pros and cons of each position and their input on desired position of labour was noted. Thirty two percent mothers opted for squatting position, twenty two percent opted for sitting on chair, eighteen percent opted for semi recumbent position with bar support, eighteen percent opted for conventional lying down position, eight percent for hydro-labour and two percent opted for delivery in standing position. Counselling pregnant women about alternative birthing positions provide autonomy to choose position during labour. Those opting for non-supine positions may be benefitted by improved labour outcome, reduction of episiotomy, instrumental delivery, caesarean section and need for labour analgesia. It will also give them a better birthing experience.

KEYWORDS : Birthing positions, alternate birthing positions, Antenatal counseling, Supine position, Upright birthing positions, maternal satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

In most Indian healthcare settings, childbirth is routinely conducted in the supine position. This practice is largely influenced by institutional norms and limited awareness among labour and delivery personnel regarding alternative birthing positions. The medicalization of childbirth has further restricted maternal mobility during labor.

Although modern obstetrics prioritizes maternal and fetal well-being, the significance of maternal comfort and autonomy is often underemphasized. Evidence suggests that alternative birthing positions, particularly upright and lateral positions, can reduce aortocaval compression, enhance uterine contractions, improve fetal alignment, and increase pelvic outlet diameters. These benefits may result in reduced operative interventions and improved maternal and neonatal outcomes.

Pros of lateral and upright birthing positions:

1. Reduce aortocaval compression
2. Enhance uterine contractions
3. Improve fetal alignment
4. Increase pelvic outlet diameters
5. Gravity assists the process of labour

OBJECTIVES

1. To educate pregnant women during the antenatal period about alternative birthing positions.
2. To assess womens' preferred choice of birthing position for delivery.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This hospital-based observational study was conducted at Pravara Rural Hospital, Loni. The study included 600 multiparous women attending the antenatal outpatient department. Participants were shown visual representations of various birthing positions, including supine, squatting, sitting, and lateral positions.

Each position's advantages and disadvantages were explained in simple language. Women were then asked to

indicate their preferred position for labor and delivery. The responses were recorded and analyzed descriptively.



RESULTS

Out of 600 multiparous women, 32% women opted for squatting with bar support, 22% women opted for sitting on chair, 18% opted for semi-recumbent position, 18% opted for traditional lying down position, 8% opted for hydro delivery only 2% women opted for delivery in standing position. The findings indicate that more than half of the women were willing to consider non-traditional birthing positions when provided with adequate information during the antenatal period.

Women's Choice About Birthing Position	Percentage
SQUATTING WITH BAR SUPPORT	32% (192)
SITTING ON CHAIR	22% (132)
SEMIRECUMBANT POSITION WITH BAR SUPPORT	18% (108)
LYING DOWN POSITION (CONVENTIONAL)	18% (108)
HYDRODELIVERY	8% (48)
STANDING POSITION	2% (12)

DISCUSSION

The study highlights the impact of antenatal counseling on women's awareness and acceptance of alternative birthing positions. Upright and lateral positions are associated with improved uterine efficiency, reduced duration of labor, and lower incidence of perineal trauma. However, institutional practices and lack of provider training continue to favor supine and lithotomy positions.

Empowering women through education enables informed decision-making and enhances childbirth satisfaction. Incorporating routine counseling on birthing positions into antenatal care may help bridge the gap between evidence-based practice and clinical routine.

CONCLUSION

Antenatal education regarding birthing positions significantly influences women's preferences. Encouraging the use of non-recumbent positions can improve maternal satisfaction and promote a positive childbirth experience. Healthcare providers should actively support women's choice of birthing position during labor.

REFERENCES

1. Gupta JK, Hofmeyr GJ, Shehmar M. Position in the second stage of labour for women without epidural anaesthesia. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. 2012;5.
2. de Jonge A, Rijnders MEB, van Diem MT, Scheepers PLH, Lagro-Janssen ALM. Sociodemographic and labour factors associated with the supine position during the second stage of labour.