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Title

Chiropractic care during pregnancy: does it affect the necessity for obstetric intervention at delivery?

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Rationale

Claims about the benefits of chiropractic during pregnancy range from pain relief without pharmaceuticals to easier births, decreased labour times and turning of the baby (e.g. if breech). Most of these claims are based on case reports, however, and there appear to be no cohort studies to support them.

Aims and Objectives

To investigate whether chiropractic treatment during pregnancy in addition to standard prenatal care was associated with changes in the necessity for obstetric (ie forceps, ventouse/ vacuum suction or caesarean) intervention at delivery.

Design

Retrospective self-completed survey.

Subjects

New mothers who had given birth up to one year previously were included in the study. The test group (n=48) had received at least 5 chiropractic treatments during their pregnancy. The age-matched control group (n=48) had received no chiropractic care.

Methods

110 self-completed questionnaires were distributed to 10 chiropractic clinics, to eligible patients who attended the college's student and paediatric clinic and to new mothers at various mother and baby groups and activities.

Results

Significantly fewer mothers (17%) in the test group reported obstetric intervention compared with 54% in the control group ($p < 0.0001$, chi squared). Pregnant women seeking chiropractic were generally older (48% aged 36-40) and often on their second pregnancy (56%). They sought care most commonly for general maintenance and pain relief, but many other reasons and combinations of these were also given.

Conclusions

Chiropractic care during pregnancy was found to be associated with a significant decrease in use of obstetric intervention at delivery.