

Association of Acute Postpartum Lower Back Pain with Epidural Analgesia

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Introduction. A common issue raised by patients with respect to epidural analgesia during labour is the possibility of lower back pain caused by epidural puncture. According to various literature sources, the incidence of lower back pain in the postpartum period is up to 50%, and the nature of this pain is often multifactorial. Epidural analgesia is the gold standard of pain relief during childbirth, with an increased frequency of use in Latvia over the recent decades.

Aim, Material and Methods. The aim of the study was to analyse acute lower back pain in the first postpartum day after epidural analgesia. The project has been approved by the ethics committee. The study design - non-randomised, prospective study with the survey of women on the first postpartum day. The epidural analgesia procedures were performed by anaesthetists with daily experience in obstetric anesthesiology. Written consent has been obtained from the participants. The study group included nulliparous women of legal age after full term labour at Jurmala Hospital. Nulliparous women who did not receive analgesia formed the control group.

Results. Preliminary results from a one-month period include a total of 37 nulliparous women; sixteen were excluded. The study was completed by 21 participants with the average age of 29 ± 3.5 years, height 1.69 ± 0.05 m, weight 75 ± 11 kg, newborn weight 3500 ± 384 g. Epidural analgesia was used in seven study cases (33%). The Visual Analog Scale (VAS) in the study vs. control group was 1.5 ± 2.5 vs 0.4 ± 1.1 , $p = 0.07$. VAS > 4 was reported by two participants of the study group and by one in the control group.

Conclusions. Epidural analgesia during labour does not increase the incidence of acute lower back pain on the first postpartum day.