

### Comparison 1: Any epidural analgesia compared with placebo or no epidural analgesia

Source:† Anim-Somuah M, Smyth RM, Jones L. Epidural versus non-epidural or no analgesia in labour. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2011;(12):CD000331.

No. of studies	Study design	Quality assessment					No. of participants		Effect		Certainty (GRADE)	Importance
		Risk of bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Other considerations	Epidural	Placebo/no epidural	Relative (95% CI)	Absolute (95% CI)		
<b>Pain intensity</b>												
1	RCT	very serious <sup>a</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>b</sup>	none	0/30 (0.0%)	19/30 (63.3%)	RR 0.03 (0.00-0.41)	614 fewer per 1000 (from 0 to 374 fewer)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Maternal pain score in labour</b>												
2	RCTs	serious <sup>c</sup>	serious <sup>d</sup>	not serious	serious <sup>e</sup>	none	60	60	-	SMD 9.55 lower (12.91 lower to 6.19 lower)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Need for additional means of pain relief</b>												
2	RCTs	very serious <sup>f</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>g</sup>	none	0/178 (0.0%)	6/177 (3.4%)	RR 0.16 (0.02-1.38)	28 fewer per 1000 (from 13 more to 33 fewer)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Maternal satisfaction with pain relief in labour - proportion rating "excellent" or "very good"</b>												
1	RCT	serious <sup>c</sup>	not serious	not serious	serious <sup>e</sup>	none	33/35 (94.3%)	25/35 (71.4%)	RR 1.32 (1.05-1.65)	229 more per 1000 (from 36 more to 464 more)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
<b>Perceived feeling of poor control in labour</b>												
1	RCT	serious <sup>c</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>h</sup>	none	14/35 (40.0%)	17/35 (48.6%)	RR 0.82 (0.48-1.40)	87 fewer per 1000 (from 194 more to 253 fewer)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Instrumental delivery</b>												
4	RCTs	serious <sup>c</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>g</sup>	none	11/258 (4.3%)	2/257 (0.8%)	RR 3.41 (0.62-18.80)	19 more per 1000 (from 3 fewer to 139 more)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Caesarean section</b>												
5	RCTs	serious <sup>c</sup>	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	11/289 (3.8%)	24/289 (8.3%)	RR 0.46 (0.23-0.90)	45 fewer per 1000 (from 8 fewer to 64 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE	critical

† Updated for the purpose of this guideline.

No. of studies	Study design	Risk of bias	Quality assessment				No. of participants		Effect		Certainty (GRADE)	Importance
			Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Other considerations	Epidural	Placebo/no epidural	Relative (95% CI)	Absolute (95% CI)		
<b>Length of first stage of labour (minutes)</b>												
2	RCTs	serious <sup>c</sup>	serious <sup>d</sup>	not serious	very serious <sup>g</sup>	none	96	93	-	MD 55.09 lower (186.26 lower to 76.09 higher)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Length of second stage of labour (minutes)</b>												
4	RCTs	serious <sup>c</sup>	serious <sup>d</sup>	not serious	serious <sup>i</sup>	none	173	171	-	MD 7.66 higher (6.12 lower to 21.45 higher)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Oxytocin augmentation</b>												
3	RCTs	serious <sup>b</sup>	not serious	not serious	serious <sup>i</sup>	none	31/208 (14.9%)	35/207 (16.9%)	RR 0.89 (0.63-1.24)	19 fewer per 1000 (from 41 more to 63 fewer)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
<b>Maternal hypotension as defined by trial authors</b>												
1	RCT	serious <sup>c</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>h</sup>	none	1/30 (3.3%)	0/30 (0.0%)	RR 3.00 (0.13-70.83)	0 fewer per 1000 (from 0 fewer to 0 fewer)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Nausea and vomiting</b>												
2	RCTs	very serious <sup>a</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>h</sup>	none	5/80 (6.3%)	0/80 (0.0%)	RR 11.00 (0.62-193.80)	0 fewer per 1000 (from 0 fewer to 0 fewer)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Fever &gt; 38 °C</b>												
1	RCT	serious <sup>c</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>h</sup>	none	5/35 (14.3%)	0/35 (0.0%)	RR 11.00 (0.63-191.69)	0 fewer per 1000 (from 0 fewer to 0 fewer)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Drowsiness</b>												
1	RCT	very serious <sup>a</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>h</sup>	none	3/50 (6.0%)	0/50 (0.0%)	RR 7.00 (0.37-132.10)	0 fewer per 1000 (from 0 fewer to 0 fewer)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Urinary retention</b>												
2	RCTs	very serious <sup>f</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>h</sup>	none	2/80 (2.5%)	0/80 (0.0%)	RR 3.00 (0.32-28.21)	0 fewer per 1000 (from 0 fewer to 0 fewer)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
<b>Apgar score &lt; 7 at 5 minutes</b>												
1	RCT	serious <sup>c</sup>	not serious	not serious	very serious <sup>b</sup>	none	0/30 (0.0%)	0/30 (0.0%)	not estimable		⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical

CI: confidence interval; RCT: randomized controlled trial; RR: risk ratio; SMD: standardized mean difference.

- <sup>a</sup> All of pooled effect derived from a study at high risk of bias.
- <sup>b</sup> Small sample size and few events.
- <sup>c</sup> Most of the pooled effect derived from studies with moderate or high risk of bias but without a substantial proportion (i.e. with < 50%) from studies with high risk of bias.
- <sup>d</sup> Severe unexplained heterogeneity.
- <sup>e</sup> Small sample size.
- <sup>f</sup> 50% of pooled effect derived from a study at high risk of bias.
- <sup>g</sup> Few events and wide confidence interval crossing the line of no effect.
- <sup>h</sup> Small sample size, few events and wide confidence interval crossing the line of no effect.
- <sup>i</sup> Wide confidence interval crossing the line of no effect.