

Companionship during labour and childbirth – subgroup analysis according to the type of support person

No. of studies	Study design	Quality assessment					No. of participants		Effect		Certainty (GRADE)	Importance
		Risk of bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Other considerations	Companionship during labour	Usual practice	Relative (95% CI)	Absolute (95% CI)		
Spontaneous vaginal birth – support people were hospital staff												
9	RCTs	serious ^a	not serious	serious ^b	not serious	none	3818/5418 (70.5%)	3678/5395 (68.2%)	RR 1.05 (1.01–1.09)	34 more per 1000 (from 7 more to 61 more)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
Spontaneous vaginal birth – support people were not hospital staff and were chosen by woman												
6	RCTs	not serious	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	528/808 (65.3%)	504/812 (62.1%)	RR 1.04 (0.97–1.11)	25 more per 1000 (from 19 fewer to 68 more)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	critical
Spontaneous vaginal birth – support people were not hospital staff and not chosen by woman												
6	RCTs	serious ^a	serious ^c	not serious	not serious	none	783/973 (80.5%)	764/1062 (71.9%)	RR 1.15 (1.05–1.26)	108 more per 1000 (from 36 more to 187 more)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
Caesarean birth – support people were hospital staff												
9	RCTs	serious ^a	not serious	serious ^b	not serious	none	613/5403 (11.3%)	648/5383 (12.0%)	RR 0.94 (0.84–1.05)	7 fewer per 1000 (from 6 more to 19 fewer)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
Caesarean birth – support people were not hospital staff and were chosen by woman												
6	RCTs	not serious	serious ^c	not serious	serious ^f	none	160/1029 (15.5%)	200/1030 (19.4%)	RR 0.76 (0.50–1.17)	47 fewer per 1000 (from 33 more to 97 fewer)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
Caesarean birth – support people were not hospital staff and not chosen by woman												
9	RCTs	serious ^a	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	175/1231 (14.2%)	272/1271 (21.4%)	RR 0.61 (0.45–0.83)	83 fewer per 1000 (from 36 fewer to 118 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE	critical
Any analgesia/anaesthesia – support people were hospital staff												
6	RCTs	not serious	not serious	serious ^b	not serious	none	3624/4574 (79.2%)	3757/4578 (82.1%)	RR 0.97 (0.96–0.99)	25 fewer per 1000 (from 8 fewer to 33 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE	critical

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		Risk of bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Other considerations	Companionship during labour	Usual practice	Relative (95% CI)	Absolute (95% CI)		
Any analgesia/anaesthesia - support people were not hospital staff and were chosen by woman												
4	RCTs	not serious	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	372/704 (52.8%)	405/704 (57.5%)	RR 0.93 (0.86-1.01)	40 fewer per 1000 (from 6 more to 81 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	critical
Any analgesia/anaesthesia - support people were not hospital staff and not chosen by woman												
4	RCTs	not serious	serious ^e	not serious	serious ^f	none	401/851 (47.1%)	477/939 (50.8%)	RR 0.72 (0.47-1.10)	142 fewer per 1000 (from 51 more to 269 fewer)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
Synthetic oxytocin during labour - support people were hospital staff												
6	RCTs	serious ^a	not serious	serious ^b	not serious	none	1795/4786 (37.5%)	1685/4775 (35.3%)	RR 1.01 (0.93-1.11)	4 more per 1000 (from 25 fewer to 39 more)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
Synthetic oxytocin during labour - support people were not hospital staff and were chosen by woman												
7	RCTs	very serious ^e	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	501/1092 (45.9%)	533/1099 (48.5%)	RR 0.99 (0.96-1.01)	5 fewer per 1000 (from 5 more to 19 fewer)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
Synthetic oxytocin during labour - support people were not hospital staff and not chosen by woman												
4	RCTs	serious ^c	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	79/505 (15.6%)	125/576 (21.7%)	RR 0.67 (0.43-1.06)	72 fewer per 1000 (from 13 more to 124 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE	critical
Negative rating of/negative feelings about birth experience - support people were hospital staff												
4	RCTs	serious ^a	not serious	serious ^b	not serious	none	225/4106 (5.5%)	256/4039 (6.3%)	RR 0.87 (0.73-1.03)	8 fewer per 1000 (from 2 more to 17 fewer)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
Negative rating of/negative feelings about birth experience - support people were not hospital staff and were chosen by woman												
4	RCTs	not serious	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	245/833 (29.4%)	453/875 (51.8%)	RR 0.58 (0.50-0.67)	217 fewer per 1000 (from 171 fewer to 259 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	critical

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		Risk of bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Other considerations	Companionship during labour	Usual practice	Relative (95% CI)	Absolute (95% CI)		
Negative rating of/negative feelings about birth experience – support people were not hospital staff and not chosen by woman												
3	RCTs	not serious	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	183/665 (27.5%)	273/660 (41.4%)	RR 0.65 (0.53–0.80)	145 fewer per 1000 (from 83 fewer to 194 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	critical
Postpartum depression – support people were hospital staff												
1	RCT	not serious	not serious	serious ^b	not serious	none	245/2816 (8.7%)	277/2751 (10.1%)	RR 0.86 (0.73–1.02)	14 fewer per 1000 (from 2 more to 27 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE	critical
Postpartum depression – support people were not hospital staff and not chosen by woman												
1	RCT	serious ^a	not serious	not serious	serious ^d	none	8/74 (10.8%)	48/75 (64.0%)	RR 0.17 (0.09–0.33)	531 fewer per 1000 (from 429 fewer to 582 fewer)	⊕⊕○○ LOW	critical
Postpartum depression – support people were not hospital staff and were chosen by woman												
0	not applicable (n/a)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	critical
Exclusive or any breastfeeding at any time point, as defined by trial authors – support people were hospital staff												
1	RCT	not serious	not serious	serious ^b	not serious	none	1312/2339 (56.1%)	1283/2220 (57.8%)	RR 0.97 (0.92–1.02)	17 fewer per 1000 (from 12 more to 46 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE	critical
Exclusive or any breastfeeding at any time point, as defined by trial authors – support people were not hospital staff and were chosen by woman												
0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Exclusive or any breastfeeding at any time point, as defined by trial authors – support people were not hospital staff and not chosen by woman												
3	RCTs	not serious	not serious	not serious	serious ^f	none	395/516 (76.6%)	356/509 (69.9%)	RR 1.11 (0.98–1.26)	77 more per 1000 (from 14 fewer to 182 more)	⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE	critical

CI: confidence interval; n/a: not applicable; RCT: randomized controlled trial; RR: risk ratio.

^a Most of the pooled effect derived from studies with moderate or high risk of bias but without a substantial proportion (i.e. < 50%) from studies with high risk of bias.

^b Hodnett 2002 included high-risk pregnancies.

^c Severe, unexplained, heterogeneity ($I^2 \geq 60\%$ or $\text{Chi}^2 < 0.05$).

^d Small sample size and/ or few events.

^e Most of the pooled effect derived from studies with moderate or high risk of bias but with a substantial proportion (i.e. > 50%) from studies with high risk of bias.

^f The CI is imprecise.