

Comparison: Upright position compared with recumbent position in the second stage of labour without epidural analgesia

Source: Gupta JK, Sood A, Hofmeyr G, Vogel JP. Position in the second stage of labour for women without epidural anaesthesia. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2017;(5):CD002006.

| No. of studies | Study design | Quality assessment | | | | | No. of participants | | Effect | | Certainty (GRADE) | Importance |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| | | Risk of bias | Inconsistency | Indirectness | Imprecision | Other considerations | Upright position | Recumbent position | Relative (95% CI) | Absolute (95% CI) | | |
| Duration of second stage of labour (minutes) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | RCTs | very serious ^a | serious ^b | not serious | not serious | none | 3114 | 2697 | - | MD 6.16 lower (9.74 lower to 2.59 lower) | ⊕○○○ VERY LOW | critical |
| Mode of birth - assisted vaginal birth | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | RCTs | serious ^c | not serious | not serious | not serious | publication bias strongly suspected | 316/3223 (9.8%) | 417/3258 (12.8%) | RR 0.75 (0.66-0.86) | 32 fewer per 1000 (from 18 fewer to 44 fewer) | ⊕⊕○○ LOW | critical |
| Mode of birth - assisted vaginal birth (sensitivity analysis) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | RCTs | not serious | not serious | not serious | not serious | none | 105/1284 (8.2%) | 141/1250 (11.3%) | RR 0.71 (0.56-0.90) | 33 fewer per 1000 (from 11 fewer to 50 fewer) | ⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH | critical |
| Mode of birth - caesarean section | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | RCTs | serious ^c | not serious | not serious | serious ^d | none | 52/2738 (1.9%) | 39/2701 (1.4%) | RR 1.22 (0.81-1.81) | 3 more per 1000 (from 3 fewer to 12 more) | ⊕⊕○○ LOW | critical |
| Mode of birth - caesarean section (sensitivity analysis) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | RCTs | not serious | not serious | not serious | serious ^b | none | 37/1311 (2.8%) | 21/1233 (1.7%) | RR 1.47 (0.88-2.46) | 8 more per 1000 (from 2 fewer to 25 more) | ⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE | critical |
| Episiotomy | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | RCTs | serious ^c | not serious | not serious | not serious | publication bias strongly suspected | 945/3096 (30.5%) | 1239/3052 (40.6%) | RR 0.75 (0.61-0.92) | 101 fewer per 1000 (from 32 fewer to 158 fewer) | ⊕⊕○○ LOW | critical |
| Second-degree perineal tears | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | RCTs | serious ^c | not serious | not serious | serious ^d | none | 504/3357 (15.0%) | 428/3358 (12.7%) | RR 1.20 (1.00-1.44) | 25 more per 1000 (from 0 fewer to 56 more) | ⊕⊕○○ LOW | critical |

| No. of studies | Study design | Quality assessment | | | | | No. of participants | | Effect | | Certainty (GRADE) | Importance |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| | | Risk of bias | Inconsistency | Indirectness | Imprecision | Other considerations | Upright position | Recumbent position | Relative (95% CI) | Absolute (95% CI) | | |
| Second-degree perineal tears (sensitivity analysis) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | RCTs | not serious | not serious | not serious | not serious | none | 184/1528 (12.0%) | 129/1449 (8.9%) | RR 1.35 (1.10-1.67) | 31 more per 1000 (from 9 more to 60 more) | ⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH | critical |
| Third- or fourth-degree tears | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | RCTs | very serious ^a | not serious | not serious | very serious ^{d,e} | none | 8/901 (0.9%) | 12/939 (1.3%) | RR 0.72 (0.32-1.65) | 4 fewer per 1000 (from 8 more to 9 fewer) | ⊕○○○ VERY LOW | critical |
| Third- or fourth-degree tears (sensitivity analysis) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | RCTs | not serious | not serious | not serious | very serious ^{d,e} | none | 6/434 (1.4%) | 4/438 (0.9%) | RR 1.46 (0.44-4.79) | 4 more per 1000 (from 5 fewer to 35 more) | ⊕⊕○○ LOW | critical |
| Blood loss > 500 mL | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | RCTs | serious ^c | not serious | not serious | not serious | publication bias strongly suspected | 192/2790 (6.9%) | 125/2825 (4.4%) | RR 1.48 (1.10-1.98) | 21 more per 1000 (from 4 more to 43 more) | ⊕⊕○○ LOW | critical |
| Blood loss > 500 mL (sensitivity analysis) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | RCTs | not serious | not serious | not serious | serious ^b | none | 85/1107 (7.7%) | 45/1079 (4.2%) | RR 1.59 (0.90-2.80) | 25 more per 1000 (from 4 fewer to 75 more) | ⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE | critical |
| Pain - pain in second stage of labour (visual analogue scale) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | RCT | not serious | not serious | not serious | very serious ^{d,e} | none | 77 | 78 | - | MD 0.32 higher (0.16 lower to 0.8 higher) | ⊕⊕○○ LOW | critical |
| Pain - pain in postpartum period (visual analogue scale) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | RCT | not serious | not serious | not serious | very serious ^{d,e} | none | 77 | 78 | - | MD 0.48 lower (1.28 lower to 0.32 higher) | ⊕⊕○○ LOW | critical |
| Use of any analgesia/anaesthesia during second stage of labour | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | RCTs | very serious ^a | not serious | not serious | not serious | none | 1034/1573 (65.7%) | 1020/1520 (67.1%) | RR 0.97 (0.93-1.02) | 20 fewer per 1000 (from 13 more to 47 fewer) | ⊕⊕○○ LOW | critical |
| Abnormal fetal heart rate patterns | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | RCTs | serious ^c | not serious | not serious | not serious | none | 10/307 (3.3%) | 22/310 (7.1%) | RR 0.46 (0.22-0.93) | 38 fewer per 1000 (from 5 fewer to 55 fewer) | ⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE | critical |

| No. of studies | Study design | Quality assessment | | | | | No. of participants | | Effect | | Certainty (GRADE) | Importance |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| | | Risk of bias | Inconsistency | Indirectness | Imprecision | Other considerations | Upright position | Recumbent position | Relative (95% CI) | Absolute (95% CI) | | |
| Perinatal death | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | RCTs | serious ^c | not serious | not serious | very serious ^{d,e} | none | 3/495 (0.6%) | 4/487 (0.8%) | RR 0.75 (0.17-3.31) | 2 fewer per 1000 (from 7 fewer to 19 more) | ⊕○○○ VERY LOW | critical |

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

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

^b Severe unexplained heterogeneity.

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

^d Wide confidence interval crossing the line of no effect.

^e Small sample size and/or few events.