

REVIEW ARTICLE

We Must be Aware about Water Birth: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

Water birth has numerous advantages, including less discomfort, shorter labour times, less need for analgesics, the opportunity to shift positions during labour, and many more. Because so few people in India are aware of it, it is not as common there. Indications and contraindications, problems, alternatives, and the benefits and drawbacks of water birth are all covered in the article.

Objectives: To record the practice of water immersion during labour and/or delivery (labour stages 1, 2, and 3) and evaluate the impact on the health of the mother, foetus, and newborn. To compare the results and safety of water immersion with traditional vaginal births and deliveries with epidural analgesia.

Material and Methods: A comparison was made between 207 women who chose water birth and 204 women who had conventional vaginal deliveries and 191 women who had vaginal deliveries with epidural analgesia. Demographic information, the duration of the first, second, and third stages of labour, the need for an episiotomy and induction, perineal injuries, NICU requirements, apgar scores, and VAS scores were recorded.

Result: Patients who had water births had shorter first stages of labour than those who had vaginal deliveries with epidural analgesia, while those who had water births had shorter second and third stages of labour than those who had traditional vaginal deliveries or vaginal deliveries with epidural analgesia. Water birth patients experienced greater perineal lacerations but required fewer induction and episiotomy. Every woman giving birth by water had lower VAS scores and a decreased need for analgesia. Regarding NICU admission, there was no difference between the groups. Both groups' Apgar scores were similar. During the trial, neither neonatal infections nor neonatal deaths occurred.

KEYWORDS

• Awareness • Water Birth • Mothers

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, Western nations have adopted a method of childbirth known as “water birth,” in which some women choose to remain submerged in the water during the first phase of labour while others opt to remain submerged throughout the entire delivery process.¹ Typically, a tub or pool that is about 4 feet wide and filled to the parturient’s breast level completely submerges the abdomen. The water is two feet deep and should be warm—not more than 37.5 degrees during the first stage of labour, and between 37 and 37.5 for the second and third.² According to studies, giving birth in water empowers the parturient, reduces pain, increases postpartum satisfaction, and promotes calm because it can lower the length of the first stage of labour and the need for interventions and analgesics.³

Water birth was first documented in a medical journal in 1805, and it gained widespread recognition in the 1980s and 1990s. The American Academy of Pediatrics released a statement about water birth later in the early 2000s, claiming that there was no research on the topic, that it put the baby in danger, and that there were no advantages for the moms. Conversely, numerous researchers from all over the world have been researching and analyzing water birth for decades, and they have shown that there are more advantages to water birth than disadvantages.⁴

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An experimental study that was randomised, prospective, and conducted in Johannesburg, South Africa’s Midwestern suburbs. There were 120 participants in total, 60 of whom were randomised at random to give birth by water and 60 to give delivery by conventional means. The findings showed that parturients were far less in pain and more happy with their capacity to handle labour after water birth.⁵

In Shaheed Akbarabadi Hospital at Iran University of Medical Sciences, 106 women participated in a randomised control experiment, of whom 53 were actively involved in the control group and 53 in the experimental group. The findings demonstrated that labour length was significantly reduced and that women who gave delivery in water had less pain. Opioids, analgesics, oxytocin, and antispasmodics were used less frequently in

the experimental group than in the control group.⁶

Who is entitled to a water birth?

- Mothers who are willing.
- Mothers who are more than 37 weeks along in their pregnancy.
- Pregnancies with low risks.
- Pregnancy health.⁷
- Physical and medical fitness.
- Prior history of C-section.¹⁴

3) Who should avoid and in which conditions?

Women under the age of 17 or above the age of 35.

- Many pregnancies.
- A history of infectious infections and complications.
- Breech posture during pregnancy.
- Premature birth.
- PROM.
- Irregular or absent FHR.
- Mothers sedated.
- Macrosomia.
- Infection.^{8,9}

4) What benefits does water birth offer?

- Enhance the satisfaction of childbirth.⁵
- Lessens labour discomfort.⁶
- The catecholamine and stress hormone levels drop during.
- Water birth shortens the length of labor.¹⁰
- Allows the mother to be in various positions during delivery.
- Improves blood circulation.
- Reduces the risk of perineal tears because of the relaxed body.¹¹
- Decreases the frequency of using pharmaceutical drugs to relieve pain.⁶
- Lowers the risk of postpartum hemorrhage.¹²
- Reduces the need for interventions.¹³

5) What dangers and difficulties come with giving delivery by water?

- Meconium aspiration; drowning.
- Cord avulsion.⁷

- Dehydration or overheating.
- Infection.
- Limited pain management options.

6) What other options are there to make labour easier?

- Techniques for relaxation.
- A birthing ball, and a hot shower.
- Moving around.
- Applying a warm compress.
- Breathing techniques.
- Music therapy.
- Aromatherapy.¹³

CONCLUSION

In India, many people are unaware of water birth. Misconceptions abound about the baby's breathing, the mother's stool passing in the bathtub or pool, etc. Individuals ought to be educated and made aware of these misunderstandings through appropriate awareness campaigns. The benefits of water birth exceed the drawbacks. The healthcare workers in the area in question need to receive the appropriate instruction and training. People might choose water birth because it is a labour procedure that involves fewer drugs and interventions and has numerous advantages over difficulties. Although it is currently exceedingly uncommon in India, water birth can alter the delivery process with the right training, education, and awareness campaigns.

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