



Maternal pelvic floor mobility exercises in labor: protocol for a scoping review

Unidade de terapia intensiva - passado, presente e futuro: um convite à reflexão

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To identify and map the types of exercises used to improve maternal pelvic floor mobility during labor and delivery. Method: Protocol for a scoping review structured according to the Joanna Briggs Institute methods and the PRIS-MA checklist for scoping reviews. Inclusion criteria will include scientific articles, editorials, research notes, theses, and dissertations. Searches will be conducted in electronic health sciences databases and dissertation and thesis repositories. Publications will be selected using Rayyan Web software by two independent review authors in blind mode, with potential conflicts resolved by a third reviewer. Data will be mapped and presented descriptively to provide an overview of maternal pelvic floor mobility exercises that can be used during labor and delivery. Descriptors: Pregnant Women; Exercise Movement Techniques; Pelvic Floor;

Labor Pain; Labor, Obstetric.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Identificar e mapear os tipos de exercícios usados na mobilidade da pelve materna aplicados no trabalho de parto e parto. Método: Protocolo de revisão de escopo, estruturado conforme a metodologia do Instituto Joanna Briggs e o checklist PRISMA para revisões de escopo. Os critérios de inclusão abrangerão artigos científicos, editoriais e notas de pesquisa, dissertações e teses. A busca será conduzida em bases de dados eletrônicas em ciências da saúde, bem como repositório de dissertações e teses. As publicações serão selecionadas com o auxílio do software Rayyan Web por dois revisores independentes no modo cego, e os possíveis conflitos serão desfeitos por um terceiro revisor. Os dados serão mapeados e apresentados de forma descritiva, com uma visão geral dos exercícios de mobilidade da pelve materna que podem ser aplicados no trabalho de parto e parto.

Descritores: Gestantes; Técnicas de Exercício e de Movimento; Diafragma da Pelve; Dor do Parto; Trabalho de Parto.

INTRODUCTION

Support during labor may involve the medical team, nursing staff, and a physical therapist. Protocols and routines designed to ensure the safety and satisfaction of women during labor and delivery guide it. The current scenario, dominated by institutionalized childbirth, poses a challenge to health professionals committed to public health policies aimed at reducing cesarean section rates and unnecessary interventions during childbirth. The use of uterotonics for induction of labor and cesarean section has increased significantly in several countries. A survey conducted in 154 countries (2010-2018) showed that the average cesarean section rate was 21.1%, ranging from 5% to 42% between sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean⁽¹⁾. Projections from this study showed that the global average cesarean section rate could reach 28.5% by 2030. Data from 2017 showed that 55.1% of births in Brazil were delivered by cesarean section, with the rate exceeding 80% in the private sector⁽²⁾. In the literature, integrative practices⁽³⁻⁴⁾ have been proposed to reclaim the humanization of childbirth assistance, empower women, reduce

unnecessary interventions, and thus ensure good obstetric practice as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO)⁽⁵⁾. Integrative practices are often used by nurses, midwives, and physiotherapists to increase women's autonomy and freedom and promote a positive and humanized birth experience.

There are a variety of integrative practices that can be used during pregnancy and labor. Joint manipulation, non-active exercises, and relaxation of the soft or myofascial tissues of the pelvis are among the practices that have shown positive effects in preparing pregnant women for childbirth⁽⁶⁻⁹⁾. These exercises include alternating between sitting and standing positions, pelvic articulation, walking, squatting, lunges, dancing, using a Swiss ball or a peanut ball, and pelvic rocking. These exercises have been associated with increased female participation, reduced professional intervention, shorter duration of labor, less pain, and consequently greater comfort⁽⁷⁻¹⁰⁾.

There is a set of pelvic floor mobility exercises called Spinning Babies that has been used in some maternity wards and birthing centers to assist in childbirth⁽¹¹⁻¹²⁾. These exercises are performed during labor and are described as facilitating the descent of the fetus into the maternal pelvic constrictions (superior, middle, and inferior). Thus, positions and movements are performed to create space for the fetus to progress(11-12). Another suggestion for pelvic floor mobility exercises is the De Gasquet method, which provides a holistic approach of different positions related to breathing to be used during pregnancy, labor, and delivery(13). Suggested positions include lateral, hands and knees, squatting, ventral, and dorsal. The De Gasquet method was developed about 40 years ago and is widely used in obstetric practice in several countries.

A preliminary search of the Cochrane Library, the Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online (MEDLINE/PubMed), and the Open Science Framework (OSF) databases in June 2023 did not identify any systematic or scoping review, either published or unpublished, regarding exercises to improve maternal pelvic floor mobility during labor. Because of the need to fill this gap and analyze studies on exercises to improve maternal pelvic floor mobility during labor through a qualitative synthesis, the present scoping review is proposed to identify and map the types of exercises to improve maternal pelvic floor mobility used during labor and delivery.

METHOD

This study will use the methodology outlined in the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Manual for Evidence Synthesis⁽¹⁴⁾ for scoping reviews. It will be written according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA-ScR)⁽¹⁵⁾. It does not require ethics committee approval because it will extract and analyze data available in digital literature databases.

Protocol and registration

The protocol for this review has been registered on the Open Science Framework (OSF) platform at DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/WM5JA and is available at: https://osf.io/wm5ja/.

Eligibility

Approach to maternal pelvic floor mobility exercises during labor and delivery.

Inclusion criteria

Scientific articles of various methodologies and designs (e.g., randomized clinical trials, nonrandomized clinical trials, cross-sectional studies, case studies, and experiential reports), editorials, research notes, dissertations, and theses will be included without language or time restrictions, published through July 2023.

Publications are listed using the PCC (Participant, Concept, and Context) mnemonic strategy⁽¹⁴⁾ (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Mnemonic elements adopted in the review. Campinas, SP, Brazil, 2023

Mnemonic	Extraction
P (participant)	Pregnant women or women giving birth at term (i.e., between 37 and 41 weeks and 6 days of gestational age) with normal risk or comorbidities, without mobility limitations, in the latent or active phase of labor.
C (concept)	Types of exercises for maternal pelvic floor mobility: walking, squats, lunges, dancing, use of a Swiss ball, use of a peanut ball, pelvic rocking, movements, and positions from the Spinning Babies® or De Gasquet® methods, among others.
C (context)	Support during labor and delivery by health care professionals, in both hospital and nonhospital settings, without geographic, religious, cultural, or social restrictions.

PCC-based review question

What publications are available on pelvic floor mobility exercises for pregnant women during labor and delivery?

Sources of information

An initial search of MEDLINE (PubMed) and Cumulated Index in Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) databases was conducted to identify articles related to the topic. Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) descriptors and keywords were searched with the assistance of a librarian (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Identification of descriptors and keywords for a scoping review on pelvic floor mobility exercises during labor. Campinas, SP, Brazil, 2023

Obstetric Labor. First Labor Stage; Labor, First Stage; First Stage Labor; Cervical Dilatation; Cervical Dilatations; Dilatation, Cervical; Dilatations, Cervical.
Parturitions; BirthBirths; Childbirth; Childbirths.
Pain, Labor; Obstetric Pain; Pain, Obstetric.
Deliveries, Obstetric; Obstetric Deliveries; Obstetric Deliver.
Childbirth, Natural; Water Birth; Water Births; Waterbirth; Lamaze Technique; Technique, Lamaze.
Cesarean Sections; Delivery, Abdominal; Abdominal Deliveries; Deliveries, Abdominal; Caesarean Section; Caesarean Sections; Abdominal Delivery; C-Section (OB); C Section (OB); C-Sections (OB); Postcesarean Section.
Movement Techniques, Exercise; Exercise Movement Techniques; Pilates-Based Exercises; Exercises, Pilates-Based; Pilates Based Exercises; Pilates Training; Training, Pilates.
Remedial Exercise; Exercise, Remedial; Exercises, Remedial; Remedial Exercises; Therapy, Exercise; Exercise Therapies; Therapies, Exercise; Rehabilitation Exercise; Exercise, Rehabilitation; Exercises, Rehabilitation; Rehabilitation Exercises.
Exercises; Physical Activity; Activities, Physical; Activity, Physical; Physical Activities; Exercise, Physical; Exercises, Physical Exercise; Physical Exercises; Acute Exercise; Acute Exercises; Exercise, Acute; Exercises, Acute; Exercise, Isometric; Exercises, Isometric Exercise; Isometric Exercise; Exercise, Aerobic; Aerobic Exercise; Aerobic Exercises; Exercises; Exercises; Exercise Training; Exercise Trainings, Exercise.
Modality, Physical Therapy; Physical Therapy Modality; Physiotherapy (Techniques); Physiotherapies (Techniques); Physical Therapy Techniques; Physical Therapy Technique; Techniques, Physical Therapy; Group Physiotherapy; Group Physiotherapies; Physiotherapies, Group; Physiotherapy, Group; Physical Therapy; Physical Therapy, Physical; Neurological Physiotherapy; Physiotherapy, Neurological; Neurophysiotherapy.
Patient Positionings; Positioning, Patient; Positionings, Patient.
Floor, Pelvic; Pelvic Diaphragm; Diaphragm, Pelvic; Diaphragms, Pelvic; Pelvic Diaphragms.
E

Search strategy

The search strategy, including all descriptors and keywords, was adapted for each database (Figure 3), which included PubMed, PubMed Central, CINAHL, Web of Science, Scopus, *Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde* (BVS), and Embase (Excerpta Medica Database). The review will also include unconventional literature (i.e., gray literature) from the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global repository.

Figure 3 - Definition of the search strategy for the scoping review on pelvic floor mobility exercises during labor, according to the descriptors and keywords of each database. Campinas, SP, Brazil, 2023

Database	Search	Search strategy	Date / Number of articles
PUBMED	#1	((((((((Labor, Obstetric[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Labor, Obstetric"[Title/Abstract] OR "Obstetric Labor"[Title/Abstract])) OR ((Labor Stage, First[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Labor Stage, First"[Title] OR "First Labor Stage"[Title] OR "Labor, First Stage"[Title] OR "First Stage"[Title] OR "Cervical Dilatation"[Title] OR "Cervical Dilatation"[Title] OR "Cervical Dilatations"[Title] OR "Cervical Dilatations"[Title] OR "Cervical Dilatations"[Title]))) OR ((Parturition[MeSH Terms]) OR (Parturition[Title/Abstract] OR Parturitions[Title/Abstract] OR Birth[Title/Abstract]] OR OR ((Labor Pain[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Labor Pain"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Pain, Labor"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Obstetric Pain"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Obstetric Pain"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Obstetric Pain"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Obstetric"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Deliveries, Obstetric"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Obstetric Deliveries"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Obstetric Deliveries"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Obstetric Deliveries"[Title/Abstract]] OR "On	28/06/2023 513,949
PUBMED	#2	((((((Exercise Movement Techniques[MeSH Terms]))) OR ("Exercise Movement Techniques"[Title/Abstract]) OR "Movement Techniques, Exercise"[Title/Abstract]) OR "Exercise Movement Technics"[Title/Abstract]) OR "Pilates-Based Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Pilates-Based Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Pilates Based Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Pilates Training"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Training, Pilates"[Title/Abstract])) OR ((Exercise Therapy[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Exercise Therapy"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Remedial Exercise"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Remedial"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Remedial Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Therapy, Exercise"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercise Therapies"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Therapies, Exercise"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Rehabilitation Exercise"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Rehabilitation Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Rehabilitation Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Rehabilitation Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Rehabilitation Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Rehabilitation Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Rehabilitation Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Rehabilitation Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Physical"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Activities, Physical"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Activity, Physical"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Physical Activity, Physical Exercises, Physical"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Physical"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Physical"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Physical"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Isometric"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Acute"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Isometric Exercises"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Acute"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercises, Acute"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercise, Training, Exercise"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercise, Training, Exercise, Title/Abstract]] OR "Exercise, Physical Therapy"[Title/Abstract]] OR "Physical Therapy"[Tit	28/06/2023 548,904
PUBMED	#3	(Pelvic Floor[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Pelvic Floor"[Title/Abstract] OR "Floor, Pelvic"[Title/Abstract] OR "Pelvic Diaphragm"[Title/Abstract] OR "Diaphragm, Pelvic"[Title/Abstract] OR "Diaphragms, Pelvic"[Title/Abstract] OR "Pelvic Diaphragms"[Title/Abstract]) Sort by: Most Recent	28/06/2023 13,859
PUBMED	#4	#1 AND #2 AND #3	12/07/2023 276
PUBMED CENTRAL (PMC)	#5	#1 AND #2 AND #3	12/07/2023 16
BVS	#6	#1 AND #2 AND #3	12/07/2023 405
CINAHL	#7	#1 AND #2 AND #3	12/07/2023 190
WEB OF SCIENCE	#8	#1 AND #2 AND #3	12/07/2023 354
SCOPUS	#9	#1 AND #2 AND #3	12/07/2023 461
EMBASE	#10	('kinesiotherapy'/syn OR 'exercise'/syn OR physiotherapy:ti,ab,kw OR 'patient positioning'/syn) AND 'pelvic floor'/syn AND ('labor'/syn OR 'labor stage 1'/syn OR 'birth'/syn OR 'labor pain'/syn OR 'obstetric delivery'/ exp OR 'natural childbirth'/syn OR 'cesarean section'/syn) AND ([embase]/lim NOT ([embase]/lim AND [medline]/lim) OR ([medline]/lim NOT ([embase]/lim AND [medline]/lim)))	12/07/2023 505
PROQUEST Dissertations and Theses Global	#11	#1 AND #2 AND #3	12/07/2023 15

Study selection

After searching the databases, all documents found will be imported into the Rayyan web application⁽¹⁶⁾, and duplicates will be removed. Blinding in the Rayyan application is activated, and two review authors independently analyze and select titles and abstracts according to the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. At the end of this phase, a third reviewer will mediate any disagreements, at which point the blinding of the selection will be removed.

All publications selected by both reviewers will proceed to a second screening stage and will be independently reviewed by the reviewers for

eligibility criteria. After reading the full texts, disagreements will be resolved by discussion and consensus among the three reviewers. The reasons for the inclusion and exclusion of publications will be reported in the results and presented in the final scoping review.

Data extraction

To extract information from the included publications, we will use a tool developed by the review authors, which was constructed in a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel 2019 according to the objectives of the review (Figure 4).

Figure 4 - Data extraction tool for the scoping review on pelvic floor mobility exercises during labor and delivery. Campinas, SP, Brazil, 2023

Variable	Standardization
Code	Text number – Database
Type of publication	Scientific articles, editorials and research notes, dissertations and theses
Year of publication	The year the study was published
Authors	Authors of the study
Objective	To detail the study objective
Method	Method as described by the author
Location	Service or place where the study was performed (geographical location)
Population and sample	Description of the women in labor, associated comorbidities, gestational age, and number of participants
Concept	Description of the type and application of the maternal pelvic floor mobility exercise
Context	Description of the timing of the maternal pelvic floor mobility exercise during labor (first period of labor, expulsion stage) and delivery
Results	Details of the results and outcomes found
Decision on inclusion or exclusion in the final review sample	Description of the decision on inclusion in the final review sample, categorized as yes or no. Description of the justification for non-inclusion.

Analysis and presentation of results

To analyze the data extracted from the publications, the main focus of each study is considered in light of the key concepts of this review, with a focus on labor and delivery assistance. To demonstrate the quality of the information source, the authenticity of the included articles will be verified using the critical appraisal tools provided by JBI (https://jbi.global/critical-appraisal-tools), and any publication bias or selective reporting in the studies will be presented in the final scoping review.

The results will be organized in tables, charts, or graphs and synthesized in a narrative form, to cover the description of exercises for maternal pelvic floor mobility, including their use,

context, and outcomes for labor and delivery, following the recommendations of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses-Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR)⁽¹⁵⁾.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have declared that there is no conflict of interests.

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