MUSIC AND AUDIO ANALGESIA

Key Words: relaxation, audio analgesia, music for pain relief in labour, music in labour

AIM

- To provide a non-invasive, non-pharmacological option for relaxation and pain relief for women in labour.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Audio analgesia uses auditory stimulation such as music, white noise and environmental sounds to provide distraction and decrease a woman’s perception of pain.

Music as a treatment for pain is easily provided, low cost, and safe. Although the magnitude of benefit from listening to music is small, and it should not be considered as the first line of treatment for pain relief, it can be used as a beneficial adjunct for pain relief management for women in labour. Small studies of primiparous women show music may be beneficial in the latent and active first stage of labour.

Cochrane systematic reviews have found insufficient evidence concerning the effectiveness of audio-analgesia for management of labour pain. However, the use of music may assist by decreasing maternal anxiety, stimulating maternal movement, and providing an aid to allow concentration and a diversion of pain.

KEY POINTS

1. Music for pain relief should not be considered as the first line of treatment.
2. Women should be encouraged to choose their own music which allows them to experience a greater sense of control, personalises the birth experience, and aids their relaxation during labour.
3. Planned use of music is beneficial as an adjunct to pain relief, stress, and relaxation management in labour.

MANAGEMENT

1. The Hospital Physical Resources Department should check all electric music players (any corded device that is to connect with KEMH electricity) for safety prior to use in KEMH. Women should be advised antenatally of this necessity.
2. The woman should be permitted to choose the type of music and adjust the volume according to her wishes. A headphone is encouraged if the volume of the music impacts negatively on others. This allows the woman to control the volume herself.
Do not keep printed versions of guidelines as currency of information cannot be guaranteed. Access the current version from the WNHS website.

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