**Effect of Wrist- Ankle Acupuncture as a nursing intervention on relieving women episiotomy pain**

**Mohamed M. Abd el salam,\* Amel A. Hassan,\*\* Manal H. Ahmed\*\*\***

*\* Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Faculty of Medicine, Benha University*

*\*\*Assistant Professor of Maternal and Newborn Health Nursing, Benha University*

***\*\*\*****Assistant Professor of Obstetric and Gynecological Nursing,*

**Abstract**

Episiotomy may increase the risk of chronic perineal pain, which was estimated to occur in 13% to 23% of women after episiotomy.

Acupuncture is one of the best known of the alternative therapies. It stimulates the release of pain-relieving endorphins and neurotransmitters, substances that transmit nerve impulses to the brain in addition to the autonomic nervous system and circulation.

experimental study design was used . -Quasi **Design :**

on s a nursing interventionankle acupuncture a -ristwof To assess the effect **Aim :** relieving women episiotomy pain.

rsity hospital.The post natal unit at Benha Unive **Setting:**

A total number of 80 women with episiotomy who fulfill the inclusion **Sampling:**criteria, this sample were divided into two groups, one for intervention, and the other as control.

-graphic characteristics. Structured interview schedule to assess socio demo - **Tools:**Visual analogue scale, the verbal numeric scale and the verbal ordinal or categorical scale to measure the objectify of the intensity of pain – and also Women satisfaction with the intervention was assessed.

t differences were observed regarding mean scores of pain : Significan**Results**relieve as well the majority of women in the acupuncture group were significantly less likely to experience pain more than the control group(p<0.001) .

in relieving episiotomy pain. Furthermore lpacupuncture heankle -Wrist **Conclusion:**the women in the study group (acupuncture group) were more satisfied with the intervention than women in the control group.

on on relieving episiotomy painankle acupuncture -wristApply **Recommendation:** large sample size in different settings for generalization.

**Key words:** Wrist- ankle acupuncture episiotomy episiotomy pain Nursing intervention 2

8

**INTRODUCTION**

Routine episiotomy is still a debatable issue among obstetricians. Selective restrictive episiotomy can lower maternal complications, decrease the rate of perineal trauma and save mothers postpartum pain ***(Shahraki et al, 2011)***. *Medio-lateral episiotomy* is an incision which made downward and outward from midpoint of fourchette either to right or left. It is directed diagonally in straight line which runs about 2.5 cm away from the anus (midpoint between anus and ischial tuberosity). The advantage of a mediolateral episiotomy is that it is less likely to extend to a 3rd or 4th degree tear***(Karbanova J.et al, 2013)***..

In order to promote the health of parturient women and their newborns, the approaches to the labor process must be evidence-based ***(Leal et al, 2013)***. However, episiotomy is still widely used in normal labor often as a routine procedure. In a study in India, ***Nagpal et al (2013)*** reported high percentages of episiotomy in both public and private hospitals, 57.8% and 79.4% respectively. The overuse of episiotomy is associated with varying degrees of maternal pain, with a negative impact on mothers' ability to perform normal daily life activities as well as caring for their newborns***.***

The literature abounds with various approaches to relieve episiotomy pain with various degrees of success and effectiveness.

The use of non-pharmacologic approaches to relieve pain during labor and postpartum can be associated with considerable benefits to women and their newborns ***(Chaillet et al, 2013)***. An important complementary method is acupuncture, which is a therapeutic technique that has become more and more popular during the past 40 years, 3

9

particularly for pain relief. A lot of studies showed its effective in reducing episiotomy pain ***(Chen et al, 2013)***.

Wrist - ankle acupuncture WAA is a modern needling technique used to treat various common diseases in different parts of the body. Acupuncture treatment has also shown various degrees of successful pain relief in obstetrics and gynecology. It has been used in dysmenorrheal and transvaginal oocyte retrieval pain ***(Huang et al, 2013; Ma et al, 2013)***, ***(Kwan et al, 2013)***. A systematic review provided moderate-quality evidence suggested that wrist-ankle acupuncture significantly reduced labor pain as well as pelvic pain or lumbo-pelvic pain in pregnancy ***(Pennick and Liddle, 2013)***. Acupuncture improves the body’s functions and promotes the natural self-healing process by stimulating specific anatomic sites; commonly referred to as acupuncture points, or acupoints. The most common method used to stimulate acupoints is the insertion of fine, sterile needles into the skin. ***(Pitangui et al, 2013)***. ***(Santos et al, 2012)***.

In traditional acupuncture, there are 361 standardized acupuncture points along 14 channels. In wrist - ankle acupuncture WAA there are only six points above the wrist and six points above the ankle. The body is divided into six bilateral longitudinal zones, each one corresponding to one of the wrist or ankle points. Horizontally, the body is divided in half at the xiphoid process. If the disease or symptom occurs above that horizontal line, a wrist point is selected. If below, an ankle point is selected ***(Hao et al, 2013)***.

Literature revealed that the most suitable type of needles are needles The proper length of the needle is 4 cm. As for ***.*** nd32 were fou -gauge 30the direction of needling, originally the needle is directed distally. However, in most cases directing the needle proximally produced better

**Significance of the study**

Episiotomy is a widely used procedure during labor, and is often associated with severe pain. Episiotomy may increase the risk of chronic perineal pain, which was estimated to occur in 13% to 23% of women after episiotomy. Moreover, the use of analgesics during lactation is controversial, hence the trend towards complementary methods. The 5

11

obstetrical nurse can play a role as acupuncturist to relieve postpartum pain, especially the episiotomy pain which is most common. Due to the importance of such role, a midwife-delivered acupuncture service which as well is currently being piloted in the United Kingdom ***(Carr et al, 2013)***.

**Aim of the work**

The aim of this study was to assess the effect of Wrist - Ankle Acupuncture as a nursing intervention on relieving women episiotomy pain. **DISCUSSION**

Wrist-ankle acupuncture is one of the best alternative therapies on relieving episiotomy pain. The study findings demonstrated significantly lower levels of pain intensity among those women who received the intervention compared to the control group.

The comparison of the baseline characteristics of women in the study and control groups, both the socio-demographic characteristics and the pre-intervention pain intensity, revealed total similarity with no significant differences. This similarity is crucial to prove that the effect of the intervention is not related to differences in these characteristics.

At the pre-intervention phase, the mean scores of pain intensity among women in the two groups were 8-10, which points to a severe degree of pain. This is quite expected since the pain of episiotomy in the early hours after labor is usually severe, and this justifies the aim of the study looking for an intervention to relieve such pain.