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Title: Alleviating perineal trauma: The APT study

Date: 2000

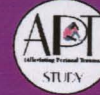
Originally published as: Poster presentation

Example citation: Steen, M. (2000). *Alleviating perineal trauma: The APT study*.  
Poster presentation.

Version of item: Published version

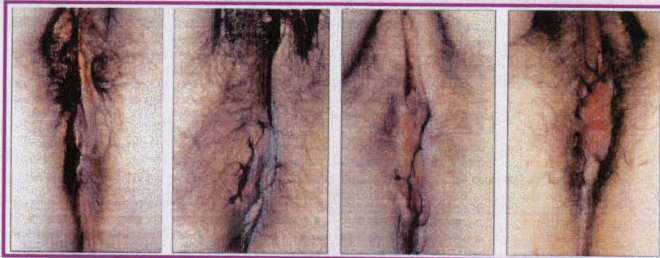
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# ALLEVIATING PERINEAL TRAUMA THE APT STUDY



Funded by the NHS Executive Northern & Yorkshire Region

Perineal Trauma 'It's severity is frequently under-estimated and many women suffer often in silence'  
Ref: Steen & Cooper, (1998)



NO OEDEMA MILD OEDEMA MODERATE OEDEMA SEVERE OEDEMA

## OBJECTIVES

To evaluate the effectiveness of a new cooling device (gel pad) with a standard regimen (ice pack) and compare these with no localised treatment regimen (control)

## STUDY DESIGN

- ◆ **Design:** A randomised controlled trial based in hospital and then continued in the community
- ◆ **Setting:** St James's University Hospital and then in women's own homes
- ◆ **Participants:** 450 women who had undergone either a normal or an instrumental delivery that required suturing of an episiotomy or second degree tear

## OUTCOME MEASURES

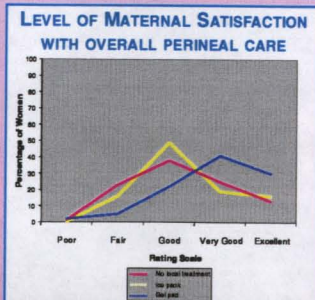
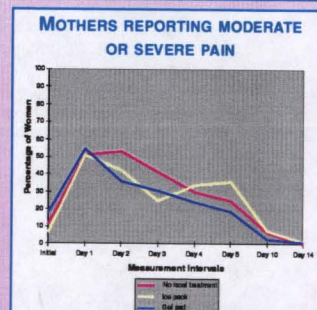
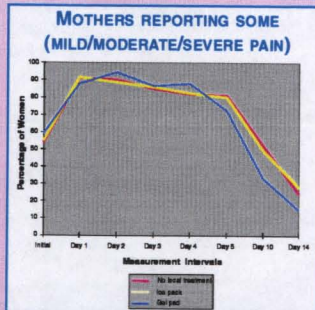
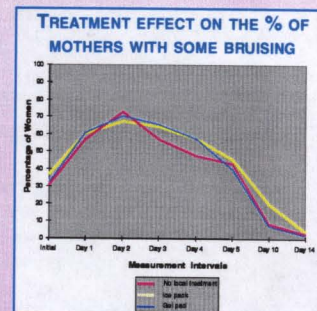
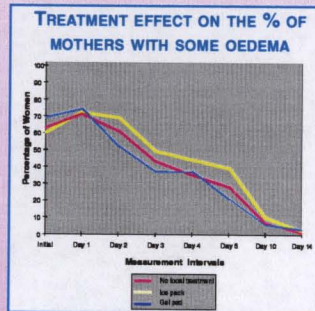
- ◆ Oedema and Bruising was assessed following suturing, daily from Day 1 to Day 5, at Day 10
- ◆ and finally at Day 14 (evaluated by visual tool)
- ◆ A categorical healing scale was used to assess healing at the same time points

## THE INTENSITY AND QUALITY OF PAIN

- ◆ **The intensity of pain:** was measured retrospectively (over the previous 24 hours) by use of a Verbal Rating Scale following the activities of walking, sitting down and lying in bed.
- ◆ **The quality of pain:** women were asked to describe the pain in their own words

## RESULTS

- ◆ 316 (71%) of questionnaires were returned
- ◆ Significant reduction in oedema was observed in favour of cooling treatments at Day 2 and Day 5  $p=0.016$ ,  $p=0.018$  (Kruskal Wallis test)
- ◆ Significant reduction in bruising was also observed by Day 10  $p=0.001$  (Kruskal Wallis test)
- ◆ Pain was less in the cooling gel pad group. A significant reduction was seen at Day 5, Day 10 and Day 14,  $p=0.023$ ,  $p=0.007$ ,  $p=0.058$  (Kruskal Wallis test)



## CONCLUSIONS

This trial confirms earlier findings in a previous. Evidence to support the use of a specially designed cooling gel pad is a safe, effective localised treatment to alleviate perineal trauma without any adverse effects on healing

## THE FEME PAD IS NOW AVAILABLE



Steen MP (1999) The feme pad: a break through in perineal pain relief. *British Journal of Midwifery* 7:4 222-224  
Steen MP (2000) Out of the ice age and into the millennium: The feme pad has arrived. *British Journal of Midwifery*. 8:5 312-315

## AWARDS

- ◆ Elizabeth Clark Charitable Trust Award (1993)
- ◆ NHS Executive Research Fellowship (1996)
- ◆ Travel Awards (1997/98) (collaborative work USA, Australia)
- ◆ Highly Commended - Original Research (1997)
- ◆ 3rd Prize - Clinical Innovation Category (1998)
- ◆ Runner-up Wound Care Nurse of the year 1999
- ◆ Smith & Nephew Foundation 1999 Nursing Research Fellowship
- ◆ Finalist in the Nye Bevan Awards 2000

## REFERENCES:

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Steen MP & Marchant P (2001) Alleviating Perineal Trauma (APT Study) *RCM Journal* (in press)