

The Woman in Labor

Objectives

- Describe the mechanisms of normal labor
- Compare neuraxial options for anesthesia in labor and their use
- Discuss the use of nitrous oxide and systemic opioids for pain management in labor
- Explain the uterine physiologic changes during labor
- Review the signs and symptoms of early labor
- Identify the difficulties of diagnosis of labor and the need for research to address knowledge gaps

Content Outline

1. Mechanisms and Management of Normal Labor
 - A. Phases of labor
 - B. Hormonal control of labor
 - C. Mechanical processes of labor
 - D. Management practices
2. Pain Management During Labor and Vaginal Birth
 - A. Neuraxial labor analgesia options
 1. Epidural anesthesia
 2. Combined spinal epidural
 3. Dural-puncture epidural
 - B. Maintenance of neuraxial analgesia
 1. Patient controlled
 2. Program intermittent boluses
 - C. Nitrous oxide
 - D. Systemic opioids
3. Physiology of Labor
 - A. Role of the uterus
 - B. Early labor
 1. Signs and symptoms
 2. Triggers
 - C. Recognition and diagnosis of labor onset
 - D. Research gaps, challenges, and controversies

Reading Material Resources

Module WB2203: The Woman in Labor is based on the resources listed below. A copy of each resource is included with the module.

Mechanisms and management of normal labor, Thorton, et al., *Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Reproductive Medicine*, 30:3, 2020, 84-90

Pain management during labor and vaginal birth, Nanji, et al., *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 67(2020), 100-112

The initiation of labour at term gestation: Physiology and practice implications, *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 67(2020), 4-18