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Title: Neonatal Health Outcomes Following Water Immersion During Labor and Delivery

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Abstract:

Water birth is child delivery that occurs in a tub of water. Water birth delivery has been offered by Miami Valley Hospital in the Family Beginnings Birth Center since 1994. The first water birth delivery that was documented in a medical journal occurred in France in 1805, which reported that the delivery resulted in a healthy baby. Water birth deliveries have been growing in popularity in the United States as mothers are interested in the possible alleged benefits of water birth including shorter labor, less pain, improved maternal experience of childbirth, and more. Although there are many potential benefits, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend women should give birth on land as there is not enough data to determine the safety of water birth labor and delivery. Water birth deliveries are thus considered an experimental procedure (ACOG CI 594).

The goal of this study is to investigate the effects of water birth delivery on the neonatal health outcomes. The patients enrolled in the study requested to have a water birth and were required to have low-risk pregnancies. Mothers enrolled must be age 18 and older. Written informed consent were obtained before enrollment. The data were collected following the approved IRB-06272 protocol. Data collected in the study include Apgar scores, incidence of infections, and incidence of NICU admissions. The data will be analyzed to compare the neonatal outcomes in the following three groups: babies whose mothers chose not to use hydrotherapy during labor or birth, babies who chose hydrotherapy during labor only, and babies whose mother chose hydrotherapy during labor and birth.