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Does the Coping Assessment for Laboring Moms (CALM) Scale Enhance Perception of Nursing Presence?

Labor pain is unique. The experience of pain during labor is highly variable among women in the sensory and affective dimensions. The severity of labor pain can be influenced by a multitude of factors. Physiologically, pain may be affected by height and weight, increasing cervical dilatation and uterine contractions, and gravidity. Psychosocial influences on labor pain include culture/ethnicity, expectations of pain severity and relief, prior experience with nongynecologic pain, anxiety, and confidence in ability to cope or self-efficacy, whereas environmental factors such as childbirth training, quality of support from the individuals present, communication, noise, and lighting all can make a difference (Lally, Murtagh, Macphail, & Thomson, 2008; Lowe, 2002; Roberts, Gulliver, Fisher, & Cloyes, 2010; Salomonsson, Berterö, & Alehagen, 2013; Schwartz et al., 2015). A large systematic review found that four factors override the importance of many of these influences. These factors included personal expectations, amount of caregiver support, quality of the patient–caregiver relationship, and involvement in decision making (Hodnett, Gates, Hofmeyr, & Sakala, 2012).

Abstract: Traditional 0-to-10 pain assessment may be inadequate during labor. The Coping Assessment for Laboring Moms (CALM) scale was developed to focus on facial, behavioral, psychosocial, vocalization, and verbal expressions to aid holistic nursing support during childbirth. Using a comparative design, the 0-to-10 pain and CALM scales were evaluated to determine differences in women's perceptions of nursing presence using the Positive Presence Index during labor at a community hospital in the Pacific Northwest. Positive Presence Index scores for *knowing what would work best for me*, *comforting touch*, *taking care of everything so I could concentrate*, and *understanding what I was saying* were significantly higher among women when nurses used the CALM tool to guide labor support. The CALM scale needs further testing with a larger, more diverse population. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nwh.2017.07.002>

Keywords: coping in labor | labor pain | labor support | nursing presence | scale

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