

ROLE OF THE OBSTETRIC NURSES DURING LABOR: INTEGRATIVE REVIEW**PAPEL DO ENFERMEIRO OBSTETRA DURANTE O TRABALHO DE PARTO:
REVISÃO INTEGRATIVA****PAPEL DE LAS ENFERMERAS OBSTÉTRICAS DURANTE EL TRABAJO DE PARTO:
REVISIÓN INTEGRADORA**

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Characterizing in the literature the importance of the care of obstetric nurses in humanized practices during labor. **Method:** An integrative review with period from January 2003 to January 2021. The search occurred through the Virtual Health Library, in the databases Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences, Medical Literature Analysis and *Retrieval System Online* and Base of Nursing Data. The articles were selected in March 2021. **Results:** The role of obstetric nurses is characterized by the relevance of childbirth care, through humanized practices such as the application of non-pharmacological measures for pain relief, promotion of care and comfort, besides encouraging women's autonomy, avoiding unnecessary behavior. **Conclusion:** Obstetric nurses are responsible and encouraging humanized practices during labor, as they recognize the benefits and have the necessary knowledge to perform quality care.

Descriptors: Obstetric Nursing; Labor, Obstetric; Humanizing Delivery;

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RESUMO

Objetivo: caracterizar na literatura a importância da assistência dos enfermeiros obstetras nas práticas humanizadas durante o trabalho de parto. **Método:** revisão integrativa com recorte temporal de janeiro de 2003 a janeiro de 2021. A busca ocorreu através da Biblioteca Virtual de Saúde, nas bases de dados Literatura Latina Americana e do Caribe em Ciências em Saúde, *Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online* e Base de Dados em Enfermagem. A seleção dos artigos realizou-se em março de 2021. **Resultados:** O papel do enfermeiro obstetra caracteriza-se pela relevância na assistência ao parto, através das práticas humanizadas como aplicação de medidas não farmacológicas para alívio da dor, promoção do cuidado e conforto, além de incentivarem a autonomia da mulher evitando que sejam realizadas condutas desnecessárias. **Conclusão:** Os enfermeiros obstetras são responsáveis e incentivadores das práticas humanizadas durante o trabalho de parto, pois reconhecem os benefícios e possuem o conhecimento necessário para realizar uma assistência de qualidade. **Descritores:** Enfermagem Obstétrica; Trabalho de Parto; Parto Humanizado;

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Caracterizar en la literatura la importancia del cuidado de las enfermeras obstétricas en las prácticas humanizadas durante el parto. **Método:** Una revisión integradora con marco de tiempo de enero 2003 a enero 2021. La búsqueda se realizó a través de la Biblioteca Virtual en Salud, en las bases de datos Literatura Latinoamericana y del Caribe en Ciencias de la Salud, Sistema de Análisis y Recuperación de Literatura Médica en Línea y Base de Datos de Enfermería. Los artículos fueron seleccionados en marzo de 2021. **Resultados:** El rol de las enfermeras obstetras se caracteriza por la relevancia de la atención al parto, a través de prácticas humanizadas como la aplicación de medidas no farmacológicas para el alivio del dolor, la promoción de la atención y la comodidad, además de fomentar la autonomía de las mujeres, evitando conductas innecesarias. **Conclusión:** Las obstétricas son responsables y fomentan las prácticas humanizadas durante el parto, ya que reconocen los beneficios y tienen los conocimientos necesarios para realizar una atención de calidad. **Descriptores:** Enfermería Obstétrica; Trabajo de Parto; Parto Humanizado;

INTRODUCTION

It is known that the discussion about humanized care within the health sector generated a great repercussion, mainly in relation to births. The humanization of childbirth is made up of behaviors and procedures that favor the healthy and physiological event of labor and birth, as it respects the natural process and avoids the use of interventionist and unnecessary behaviors, which put the mother and baby at risk.¹

In Brazil, around three million births take place annually, 98% of which occur in

a hospital environment (public or private).

In recent years, technology and obstetric procedures have made significant advances, which has resulted in a decrease in maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality rates.²

However, there are numerous cases of unnecessary interventions, offensive speech and patient exposure, which can occur from prenatal care, during childbirth and even postpartum, which are considered obstetric violence. Such situations have become common within the obstetric field, which has led to a debate on issues and humanized practices related to childbirth.³

According to the National Guidelines for Assistance to Normal Birth, in recent decades, obstetric practice has undergone major changes, mainly in the promotion and recovery of the natural and physiological characteristics surrounding labor and birth, due to the influences of public opinion and service clients. health, in addition to the emergence of new technologies and scientific evidence in developed countries.²

Childbirth is a natural and special process for women and must be respected, and it is nursing's duty to provide support, both physical and emotional, for the woman in labor and her family. It must be taken into account that when we think about natural birth, the idea of a painful and difficult moment comes to mind. However, obstetric nurses as educators contribute to changing this culture through humanized assistance, explaining the advantages and safety of a normal birth for the woman and the baby.⁴

Therefore, the present study is relevant to highlight labor care practices carried out by obstetric nurses within hospital services. Therefore, the study aims to characterize in the literature the importance of assistance from obstetric nurses in humanized practices during labor.

METHOD

This is an integrative literature review composed of six stages.⁵ In stage 1, the theme and research question were elaborated,

where the PICO strategy was adopted, where “P” (population) obstetric nurses; “I” (Interest) Humanized practices during labor and “Co” (context) hospital environment. Therefore, the guiding question was: How important is the assistance of obstetric nurses in humanized practices during labour in the hospital environment?

In stage 2, the inclusion criteria were adopted: articles in English, Portuguese and Spanish and available in full in the databases selected for the present study; that address the role of obstetric nurses in humanized practices during humanized labor in the hospital environment; published from January 2003 to January 2021. Exclusion criteria: review articles; editorials, case reports and opinion reports.

The time frame was chosen because the investigations were considered worthy and timely, after the publication, in 2003, of the National Humanization Policy (PNH), which seeks to put into practice the principles of the Unified Health System (SUS) in the daily lives of health services, producing changes in the ways of managing and caring.⁶

The survey of studies was carried out by the Virtual Health Library (VHL), in March 2021, in the databases Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences (LILACS), Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online (MedLine) and Nursing Database (BDENf). The Health

Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) were used, with the following Boolean operators: “Obstetric Nursing AND Humanized Delivery AND Labor AND Hospital Care” and “Obstetric Nursing AND Humanizing Delivery AND Labor, Obstetric AND Hospital Care”.

To extract the data (Stage 3), they were initially analyzed by reading the titles and abstracts in order to identify whether they had the potential to answer the question established in the previous stage. After this refinement, the articles were read in full and for those that met the inclusion criteria, information was extracted for the context of this research, namely: authors, year of publication, country, method, humanized practices, objective(s) and main results.

The search, selection and analysis of articles were carried out by two independent examiners and in cases of disagreement, a third examiner was invited to participate in the consensus meeting regarding the selection of studies. After repeated readings,

the articles that made up the final sample were organized in a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet, version 2016, and the variables were presented descriptively in a table, making interpretations and comparisons between the similar and conflicting results of the selected studies (Steps 4 and 5).

Step 6 consisted of presenting the review/synthesis of the evidence found, enabling the reader to understand the importance of obstetric nursing and its positive contributions to the humanized care of women during labor.

RESULTS

82 studies were identified in the databases. Of these, 19 were excluded due to duplication and 35 after reading the titles and abstracts. After reading in full, 28 were excluded for not meeting the eligibility criteria – five articles were eligible to compose this integrative review. The steps taken to search and select articles are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 -Flowchart for selecting studies for integrative review. Curitiba, PR, Brazil, 2021. Source: Adapted from Prisma, 2020.

Among the selected studies, the year of publication ranged from 2013 to 2020 and all studies were carried out in Brazil (100%). Of these, three (60%) presented a qualitative

approach and two (40%) a quantitative approach. The humanized practices used during labor are presented in table 1.

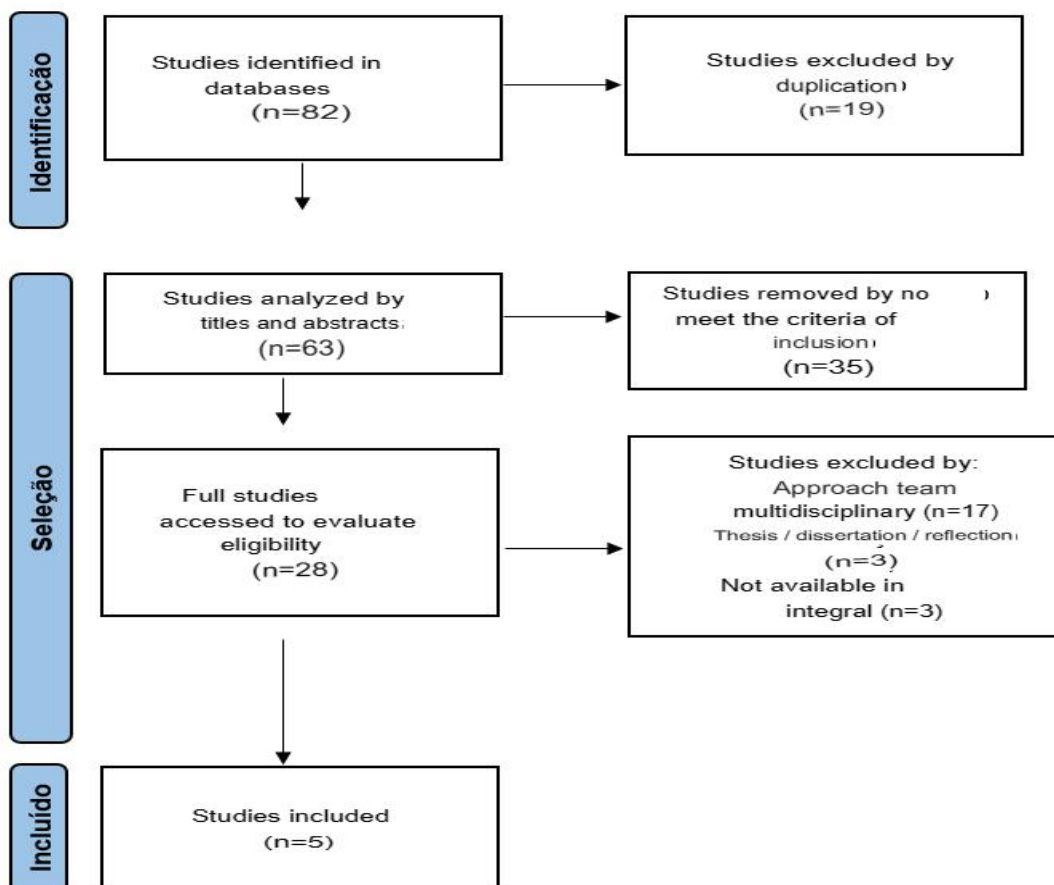


Chart 1 –Summary of studies included for integrative review. Curitiba, PR, Brazil, 2021

Article identification, year of publication, country	Method	Goals	Humanized Practices	Main results
A1 ⁷ , 2013, Brasil	Qualitative approach study.	Describe the criteria used by nurses to indicate a relaxing environment for parturient women and analyze the meanings, for obstetric nurses, of the care provided in this environment.	Warm spray bath, walking, massage, half-moon stool and bobath ball.	The criteria to indicate the relaxation environment were grouped into the following themes: needs and desires of the parturient woman; favorable obstetric criteria and unfavorable environmental conditions in the birth process. The meanings of obstetric nursing care in a relaxing environment were grouped into the following themes: respect for women's rights in obstetric care and the promotion of comfort and favoring natural birth.
A2 ⁸ , 2016, Brasil	Descriptive, retrospective study, with a quantitative approach based on documentary analysis.	Analyze births accompanied by obstetric nurses, relating their practice to the policy of humanization of labor and birth.	Walking, lateral positioning, warm spray bath, massages, aromatherapy and cryotherapy.	First-time pregnant women represented 44.16% of pregnant women. The most recurrent interventions were the administration of oxytocin and amniotomy. The dorsal horizontal position occurred in 12.89% of births. The incidence of episiotomy was 15.52%. Of those who did not undergo

				episiotomy, 36.42% remained with an intact perineum, with only one case of severe perineal laceration.
A39, 2018, Brasil	Quantitative, descriptive and exploratory study.	To evaluate the care and satisfaction of postpartum women assisted by obstetric nurses in a Normal Birth Center.	Relaxation techniques, massages, warm baths, walking and positions freely chosen by the parturient woman.	100% of parturients highlighted the care to protect their privacy, the teaching of using strength to facilitate the expulsion of the baby and the importance of the companion during the birth as very important; 91% reported that they always received information about the birth process; 95.7% emphasized the importance of non-pharmacological strategies to speed up labor and reduce pain and 95.7% were satisfied with the care provided by the obstetric nurse and the Nursing team during labor.
A4 ¹⁰ , 2020, Brasil	Qualitative, descriptive and exploratory study.	To understand women's perception of assistance during labor, delivery and birth provided by obstetric nurses in a public hospital in southern Brazil.	Sprinkler bath, Swiss ball, music therapy, massage and walking.	The importance of the obstetric nurse's role in humanized and respectful care during labor was highlighted, highlighting their role in encouraging the use of non-pharmacological methods of pain relief during labor, in addition to offering emotional support.
A5 ¹¹ , 2020, Brasil	Cross-sectional, retrospective and analytical study	To compare care practices in high-risk births attended by obstetric nurses in a public hospital in Porto Alegre/RS in 2013 - the beginning of the collaborative model at the institution - with care practices carried out in 2016.	Change of position during PT, therapeutic massage and warm spray bath.	The comparison of care practices revealed a reduction in interventions such as trichotomy, use of rectal suppositories, lithotomy position, use of pain relief medications, epidural analgesia, use of oxytocin, venous catheterization, cardiotocography, tonsure, obstetric ball and semi-sitting position. There was a percentage increase in practices such as changing the rebozo position, squatting position, four-legged position, right lateral position, left lateral position, use of a partogram, therapeutic massage, delayed clamping of the umbilical cord, skin-to-skin contact, amniotomy and liquid diet.

Caption: TP = Labor;
Source: authors, 2021

The role of the obstetric nurse is to offer and explain to women about humanized practices, pain relief methods and encourage their autonomy. This professional is a great supporter of the use of non-pharmacological methods, such as spray

baths, walking and changing positions during labor and therapeutic massage for pain relief.

And more than that, your role is to put your knowledge into practice with the aim of providing a safe and humanized birth.

DISCUSSION

After reading all the articles, there were common points that characterized the role of obstetric nursing and its positive contributions to humanized childbirth care, enabling a pleasant experience for women, respecting the physiology of childbirth and women's protagonism.

Humanized practices during labour, especially in relation to non-pharmacological pain relief methods, are used by obstetric nurses, as pointed out in a study carried out in a public maternity hospital in the state of Piauí, and are accepted by parturients, enabling feelings of trust and well-being.⁷⁻⁸

These professionals are responsible for the growth in the use of good practices during labor, respecting individuality and increasing women's autonomy at this time. They encourage women's protagonism and empowerment, as well as welcoming women, carrying out techniques, procedures and guidance, and providing safety and support throughout the process, characterizing their important role in assisting this population.⁹⁻

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Thus, obstetric nursing is also a great promoter of the use of non-pharmacological methods for pain relief, such as sprinkling, therapeutic massage, walking and changing positions during labor, which are recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), since these practices have been shown to significantly reduce the use of pain-relieving drugs and epidural analgesia.¹¹

A study carried out in a hospital in the state of Goiás showed that the inclusion of obstetric nurses in the humanized practice of childbirth care had benefits in terms of reduced interventions and greater satisfaction among the women attended. This reinforces the importance of these professionals during labor.¹²

It is also noteworthy that although the importance of obstetric nurses is evident, there is still a lack of recognition by patients, institutions and other health professionals who accompany parturients.⁹ Obstetric care is centered on medical professionals and interventionist measures, and a large part of the population is unaware that obstetric nurses have the skills to provide normal childbirth care based on the best scientific evidence. The recognition of this professional area of nursing is very recent, but bodies such as the WHO and the Ministry of Health have begun to invest in and qualify these professionals because they understand their value and significance.^{9,10}

The study's limitations include the number of studies identified on the subject and the fact that other international databases were not selected, limiting the inclusion of other studies.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that obstetric nursing care is extremely important for the humanization of childbirth, given that these professionals are responsible for and encourage humanized practices during labour, as they recognize its benefits and have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide quality care.

It is clear that the work of obstetric nurses transforms the experience of childbirth into a more pleasant and positive moment for the woman and her family. Through non-pharmacological pain relief methods, the promotion of maternal autonomy and self-esteem, as well as respect for the privacy and individuality of each patient, this unique moment in women's lives is humanized.

Unfortunately, the recognition of these professionals by society is lacking, and it is essential that health bodies and institutions promote the appreciation and dissemination of the importance of these professionals.

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