

Examination of the Beliefs & Attitudes of Pregnant Hispanic Nulliparous Women Regarding the Use of Epidural Anesthesia

Catherine Berglund, B.Sc.
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What is epidural anesthesia and why is it so popular in the labour and delivery setting?



University of Kentucky

What racial/ethnic differences exist regarding the use of epidurals?

Racial/ethnic characteristics among women who did and did not receive epidural analgesia in Washington State, 2003 and 2004.			
Variable		Epidural n (% of race)	No epidural n (% of race)
Race/ethnicity of mother	White	23,328 (54.7%)	19,329 (45.3%)
	Black	1136 (47.7%)	1247 (52.3%)
	Native American	610 (44.1%)	773 (55.9%)
	Asian/PI	2592 (47.9%)	2815 (52.1%)
	Hispanic	1997 (26.7%)	5481 (73.3%)

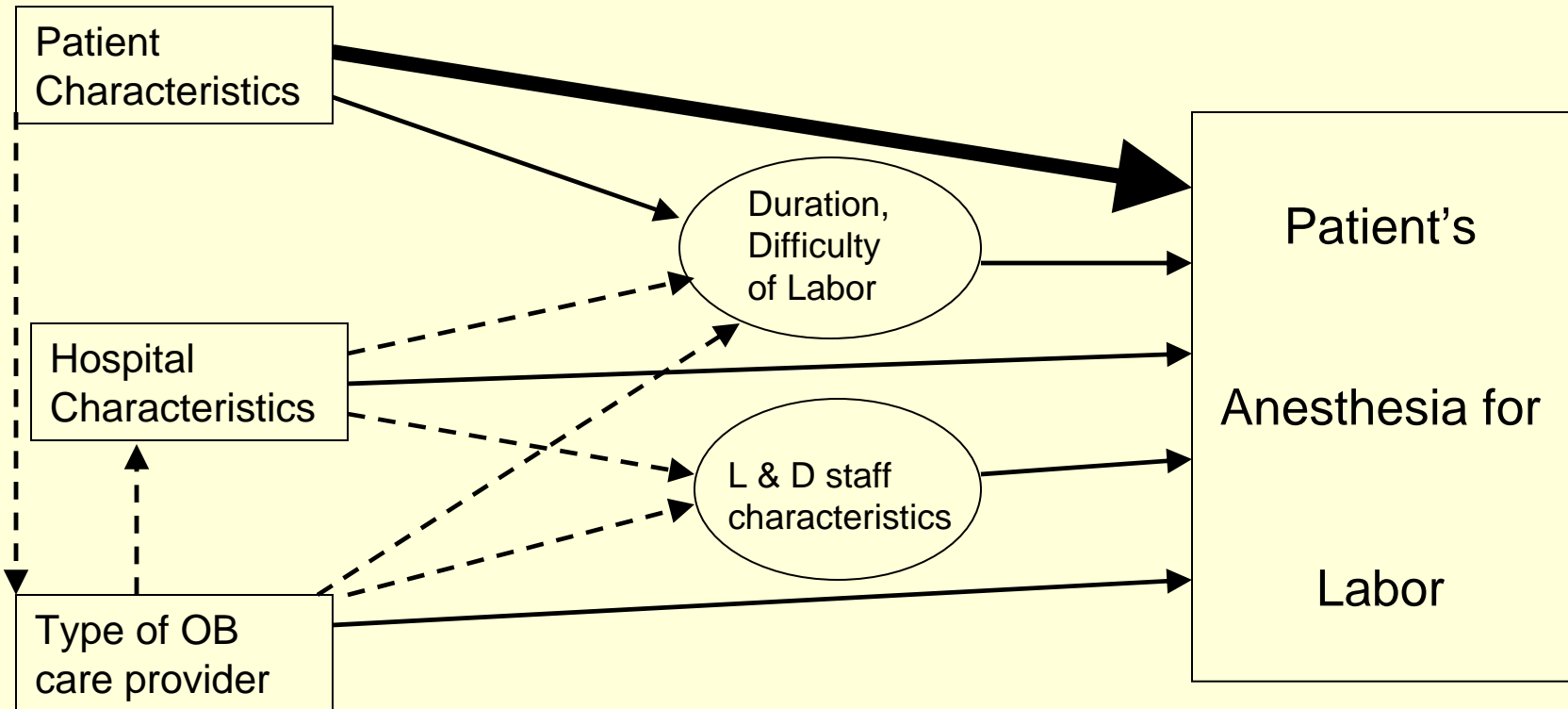
(from Altman, 2006)

So, what factors may be contributing to the low use of epidurals by Latinas?

- Rural vs. urban residence?
- Larger family size?
- Medical insurance?
- Lack of communication with providers?
- Cultural preference for natural childbirth?
- Fear of side effects?
- Racial disparity in health care?

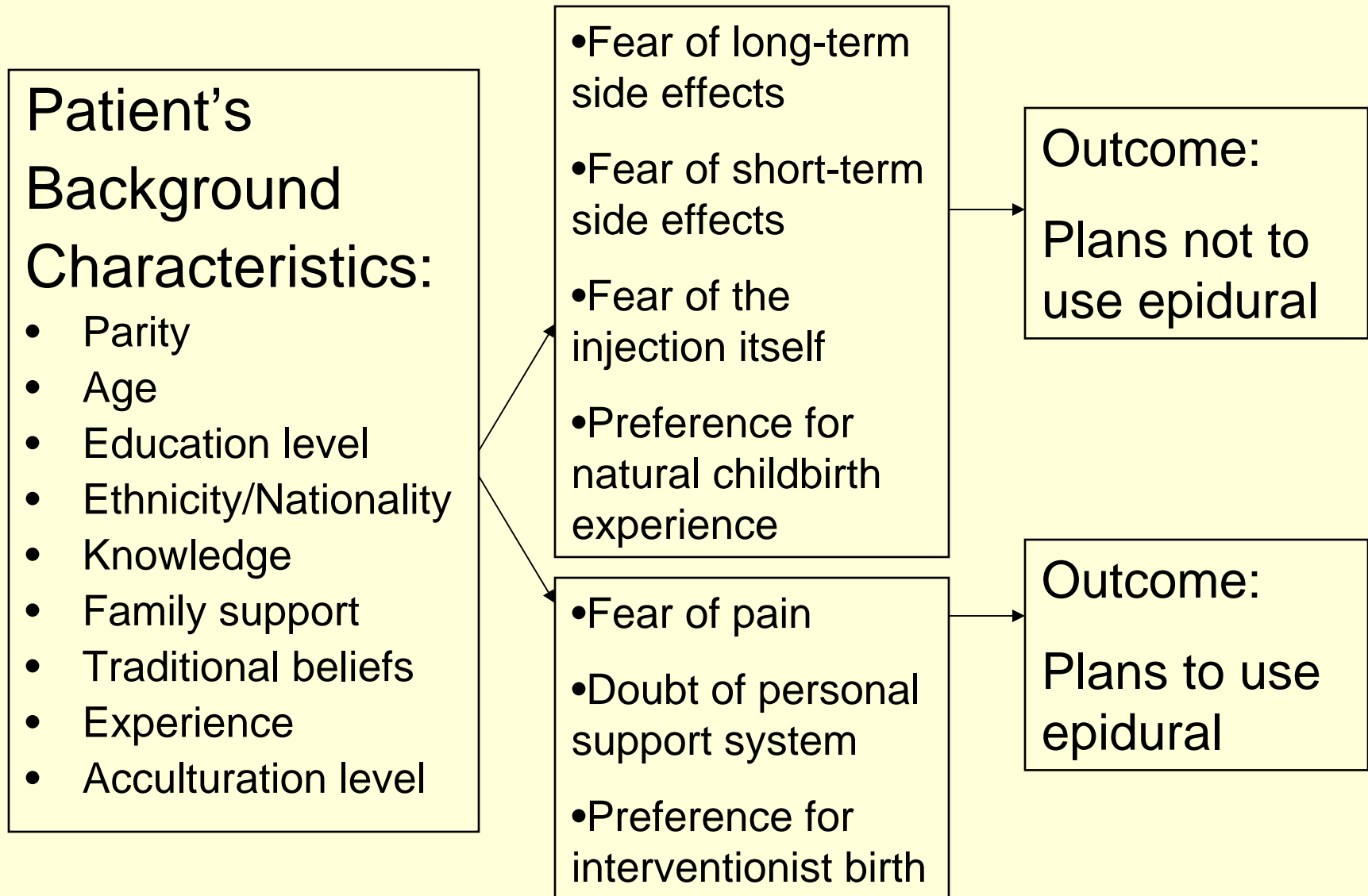
Conceptual Model

for Latinas' Use of Epidural
Anesthesia in Labor



Conceptual Model

for Latinas' **Desire** to Use or Avoid Epidural Anesthesia in Labor



Specific Aims

- Examine the likelihood of the desire for epidural use or avoidance across selected demographic characteristics in Washington State Latinas, including maternal age, race/ethnicity, birthplace, acculturation level, education, weeks gestation, information source, hospital, and obstetrical provider.
- Examine the personal reasons behind a woman's choice for planning to use or avoid epidural anesthesia in her labour.

Inclusion Criteria

- Expecting first child
- Spanish-speaking
- Receiving prenatal care
- 18 or over

Possible Associations

- Education
- Age
- Nation/state of origin
- Rural vs. urban background
- Ethnicity
- Family support/influence
- Acculturation

Challenges & Obstacles

- IRB approval for a vulnerable population
- Cooperation of supervisors & staff
- Sample size
- Quantitative and qualitative data
- Early “saturation” of responses
- 2 on the schedule \neq 2 in the tape recorder
(and the rising price of gas!)

Examples of Epidural-Related Questions

- Have you heard of “epidural anesthesia”?
- Do you think that you will choose to have an epidural for your labour?
- Why is that? What are the reasons for your choice?
- From whom have you heard about epidurals?

Table 1: Characteristics of nulliparous Latino women who did and did not want to receive epidural anesthesia for their upcoming labor				
Variable		Plan to use epidural (n = 26)	Don't know (n = 4)	Hope to avoid (n = 20)
Maternal age (years)	18-19	5 (19%)	1 (25%)	4 (20%)
	20-21	4 (15%)	0	6 (30%)
	22-24	9 (35%)	1 (25%)	6 (30%)
	25-29	6 (23%)	2 (50%)	4 (20%)
	30-34	2 (8%)	0	0
Self-identity	Mexican	23 (89%)	3 (75%)	18 (90%)
	Mexican-American	1 (4%)	0	1 (5%)
	South American	2 (8%)	0	0
	Central American	0	1 (25%)	0
	Other (NHispanic)	0	0	1 (5%)
Childbirth course taken	Yes	5 (19%)	0	7 (35%)
	No	21 (81%)	4 (100%)	13 (65%)
Primary info source(s) (more than one answer acceptable)	Friend/acquaintance	16 (64%)	3 (75%)	8 (40%)
	Mother	8 (32%)	0	6 (30%)
	Sister	4 (16%)	1 (25%)	2 (10%)
	Other female relative	5 (20%)	1 (25%)	8 (40%)
	Medical provider	2 (8%)	0	2 (10%)
	Childbirth instructor	4 (16%)	0	2 (10%)
	Book	6 (24%)	0	1 (5%)
	Internet	0	0	1 (5%)
	Television	0	0	1 (5%)
	Interviewer	1 (4%)	0	0
	Other	0	0	2 (10%)
Years of education	7-9	5 (19%)	0	4 (20%)
	10-12	11 (42%)	3 (75%)	11 (55%)
	Some college or more	10 (39%)	1 (25%)	5 (25%)
Years of US schooling	None	10 (39%)	2 (50%)	8 (40%)
	0.25 to 1.5	7 (27%)	0	3 (15%)
	2 to 3	2 (8%)	1 (25%)	3 (15%)
	4 or more	7 (27%)	1 (25%)	6 (30%)
Type of OB provider	Midwife	7 (27%)	2 (50%)	5 (25%)
	Family practitioner	2 (8%)	0	3 (15%)
	Obstetrician	17 (68%)	2 (50%)	12 (60%)
Weeks of gestation	39 or more	0	0	2 (10%)
	37 or 38	2 (8%)	0	2 (10%)
	35 or 36	5 (19%)	1 (25%)	3 (15%)
	31-34	4 (15%)	1 (25%)	7 (35%)
	27-30	8 (31%)	2 (50%)	4 (20%)
	26 or less	7 (27%)	0	2 (10%)
Childhood residence	City	13 (50%)	0	11 (55%)
	Town	11 (42%)	4 (100%)	8 (40%)
	Rural	2 (8%)	0	1 (5%)

Associations with planning to choose an epidural

- From Mexico City or South America
- College educated
- More distant due date
- Friend, acquaintances, or books info source
- 25 or older
- No childbirth course taken

Reasons for planning to use epidural anesthesia

- Will use it if pain is unbearable
- It lessens/removes the pain
- Heard childbirth is really painful
- No firsthand experience
- Self-doubt (of tolerance)
- Conscious/centered on baby, not pain

Reasons for hoping to avoid epidural anesthesia

- Long-term back pains/aches/problems
- Back hurts when the weather is cold
- Preference for “normal”/natural birth
- Desire to feel labor pains and/or baby
- Hopes to push more effectively
- Afraid of needles
- Would use epidural as a last resort only

Future Considerations

- Postpartum follow-up study?
- Better provider education
- More culturally competent OB care
- Tailored prenatal preparation
- Further research on Mexican anesthetic practice and outcomes

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