**Talking Points of CUMH Study for GentleBirth Instructors**

**Background**

* Labour is traditionally associated with pain.
* Anticipation can create anxiety.
* Fear, anxiety and feeling of loss of control
  + Increases intensity and incidence of pain
  + Increases risk of Post-traumatic stress disorder
  + Increases risk of Postnatal depression.
* Birth preparation is well recognised as an important factor in helping women to prepare for an often painful event.

For Instructors outside of the US it’s important to note that maternity services in Ireland are based on the medical model of care and very similar to the USA (current C/S rates are currently at 30%).

**Rationale for Study**

* Antenatal education –different models
* To look at two models of education to assess if there was a difference in maternal expectations entering labour, their experience and potential labour outcomes

**Aims & Objectives**

* Aim: To assess the efficacy of ‘GentleBirth’ techniques and comparing it to the standard antenatal class, as well as exploring expectant mother’s perception, knowledge and experience of birth.
* Objectives: To investigate the correlation between birth preparation and Childbirth Expectation Questionnaire
* To investigate the correlation between birth preparation and Childbirth Experience Questionnaire

**Obstetrician Led**

Independent study by a student Doctor and supervised by Cork Obstetrician Mairead O’Riordan

Study compared 100 first time mothers who attended a GentleBirth workshop and 100 women who attended standard hospital antenatal classes in 2016.

Birth Outcomes: Induction, use of epidurals and breastfeeding achieved statistical significance

Pain coping, interventions and Birth partner involvement – GentleBirth scored higher.

**Discussion:**

* CREATING A BETTER FUTURE TOGETHER National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026
* ‘GentleBirth’ mothers have a more positive childbirth expectation and experience.
* This is associated with anticipation to cope with pain, reduced medical intervention and receiving support from partner/coach
* Positive birthing experience is related to better coping ability.

In line with the recent launching of “National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026: creating a better future together” in Ireland, one of the four strategic priorities is “recognizing pregnancy and birth as a normal physiological process and facilitating a woman’s choice regarding their preferred pathway of care.” Comprehensive antenatal education is also outlined in the strategy as “to benefit women and their partners, as well as helping and preparing them for pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood.” This is what we are aiming to achieve with our antenatal education. Therefore, consideration should be given to include and introduce some concepts from GentleBirth into our current antenatal education programmes.

**Conclusion**

Birth preparation is well recognised as an important element for helping women to cope with labour. GentleBirth seems to induce more positive maternal birthing expectation and experience in comparison to midwife-led standard antenatal class. Further longitudinal studies are required to explore these initial findings.

**Study Strength & Weaknesses**

**Strengths:**

Prospective data

No selection bias

First study in Ireland

Validated

**Limitations:**

Not longitudinal

Small sample size

Short timeframe

Data collected through questionnaire

**Additional Recent Studies to Review**

Benefits of preparing for childbirth with mindfulness training: a randomized controlled trial with active comparison (2017)

BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth BMC series – open, inclusive and trusted2017**17**:140

[https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-017-1319-3](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-017-1319-3" \t "_blank)

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<https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-017-1319-3>

SheBirths

(Similar weekend workshop to GentleBirth)

Complementary therapies for labour and birth study: a randomised controlled trial of antenatal integrative medicine for pain management in labour

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/7/e010691>