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Orgasmic birth



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“Even as open minded as I thought I was, the concept was almost embarrassing. I imagined this 'mother' lying in a hospital bed, having an orgasm in front of a bunch of strangers – and doctors, no less.”

Laura Shanley, website Unassisted Childbirth

JOHNTHOMAS DIDYMUS “Study: Mothers do experience orgasmic or ecstatic childbirth”
<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/351412#ixzz3wfMtRzSr>

Key words

Orgasmic birth

Pleasurable birth

Satisfying birth

Ecstatic birth

Psychoprophylactic birth

Natural birth

Undisturbed birth

Unmedicated birth

Hormones

Inside power



Why we need to talk about orgasmic birth

- Too many women experience birth as nothing more than a routine or painful event. [1]
- Though childbirth is frequently spoken of in terms of pain and punishment, some women do experience what are known as *orgasmic or ecstatic births*.
- Yet, educators and health-care providers have changed their assumptions about birth as they have learned more from the midwifery model of care, how women want to give birth, and how capable the body is to give birth.
- Educators' teaching must now emphasize the synchrony of hormones that facilitates birth, the Sphincter Law, and the sharing of woman-to-woman stories throughout the generations if birth is to be set in its rightful place—in the hands of the mothers. [2]

[1]Orgasmic Birth: Your Guide to a Safe, Satisfying an Pleasurable Birth Experience

<http://elizabethdavis.com/books/orgasmic-birth>

[2] Barbara A. Hotelling “From Psychoprophylactic to Orgasmic Birth”

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2776526/>

“To clarify—orgasmic birth does not necessarily mean you experience orgasm but that you birth connected to your body and your baby with feelings of ecstasy and release, as supported by normal physiology. When women don’t have this experience, it is usually due to environmental factors and/or interventions that disrupt the process. Orgasmic birth is not a performance standard, but it is every woman’s birthright!”

Elizabeth Davis

Orgasmic Birth: Your Guide to a Safe, Satisfying and Pleasurable Birth Experience
<http://elizabethdavis.com/books/orgasmic-birth>

Normal birth

- We define normal birth as: spontaneous in onset, low-risk at the start of labour and remaining so throughout labour and delivery. The infant is born spontaneously in the vertex position between 37 and 42 completed weeks of pregnancy. After birth mother and infant are in good condition.

World Health Organization

"Childbirth climax: The revealing of obstetrical orgasm"

- The new study, conducted by psychologist Thierry Postel of Blainville-sur-Mer, France
- Midwives report witnessing orgasms in about **0.3%** of births.
- **956** French midwives
- An online questionnaire about orgasmic birth
- **109** complete responses for midwives, who, combined, had assisted **206 000** births in their careers
- The results "established the fact that obstetrical pleasure exists"
- Results:
 - » Midwives reported **668** cases in which mothers told midwives they'd felt orgasmic sensations in birth
 - » In another **868** cases, midwives said they'd seen mothers demonstrate signs of pleasure during childbirth
 - » Finally, nine mothers completed questionnaires confirming they'd experienced an orgasm during birth.

Orgasmic Birth: Orgasms During Childbirth Are Real, Study Suggests

The anatomy of orgasmic birth

- It is stimulation of the birth canal, stimulation of the cervix, the vagina and the clitoris and uterine contractions.
- A lot of women say during sexual orgasms uterine contractions feel pleasurable.
- Every woman's anatomy is different so some women may experience pleasure during childbirth while others feel only the pain.

Barry Komisaruk,

professor of psychology at Rutgers University in New Jersey

JOHNTHOMAS DIDYMUS "Study: Mothers do experience orgasmic or ecstatic childbirth"
<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/351412#ixzz3wfMtRzSr>

When the baby's coming down the birth canal, it's going through the exact same positions as something going in, the penis going into the vagina, to cause an orgasm. And labor itself is associated with a huge hormonal change in the body, way more prolactin, way more oxytocin, way more beta-endorphins -- these are the molecules of ecstasy

Dr Christian Northrup, an expert

JOHNTHOMAS DIDYMUS "Study: Mothers do experience orgasmic or ecstatic childbirth"
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The anatomy of orgasmic birth

- Sexual stimulation and orgasm reduce sensitivity to pain
- In 1988, Komisaruk and his co-researchers published a study in the *Journal of Sex Research* that found when women stimulated their vaginas or clitorises, they became less sensitive to painful stimulation
- In rats, Komisaruk has found that vaginal stimulation blocks the release of a pain transmitter called Substance P right at the level of the spinal cord.
- In addition, two regions of the brain that become active during orgasm, the **anterior cingulate cortex** and the **insula**, are also active during painful experiences → "There's *something very intriguing going on between pain and pleasure*," said Komisaruk. [1]
- Out of the laboratory and in the delivery room, clitoral and nipple stimulation provide pain relief for some women during labor. Some even use vibrators during labor to decrease pain. (Pascali-Bonaro) [2]

[1]JOHNTHOMAS DIDYMUS "Study: Mothers do experience orgasmic or ecstatic childbirth" <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/351412#ixzz3wfmTRzSr>

[2]Orgasmic Birth: Orgasms During Childbirth Are Real, Study Suggests http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/01/orgasmic-birth-orgasms-during-childbirth_n_3372097.html

Hormones of Labor and Birth

- Hormones play an essential role throughout labor and birth. By understanding how these hormones function during a natural birth, women can learn how to work with them when they are in labor.
- At the same time, women can make more informed decisions with their healthcare professionals about medical interventions that can disrupt the natural role of hormones.
- Oxytocin, endorphins, and adrenaline are the main types of hormones

Hormones of Labor and Birth

<http://www.childbirthgraphics.com/index.php/articles/hormones-of-labor-and-birth/>

Oxytocin

- The key to orgasmic birth
- Known as the hormone of love, oxytocin is secreted during lovemaking; after ovulation; and during labor, birth, and breastfeeding.
- It is released in pulses, coordinating beautifully with the release of beta-endorphin that makes labor effective, but not severe.
- Oxytocin receptors in the myometrium of the uterus increase 30–100 times in the first trimester of pregnancy and by up to 300 times by term.
- Oxytocin from the baby is believed to cause labor to begin
- During labor, oxytocin stimulates contractions. As each contraction occurs, the pain signals the brain to release more oxytocin, which then increases the contractions.
- The release of oxytocin and the rhythmic contractions of labor facilitate cervical dilatation, delivery of the baby, and expulsion of the placenta.
- !!! when synthetic oxytocin is introduced into the body, oxytocin receptors in the laboring woman's body detect these high synthetic levels and signal the brain to reduce production of its own oxytocin.
- without their natural oxytocin, mothers are at higher risk of bleeding after the birth, and the hormone of love that causes the mother to protect her baby is shut down.

Hormones of Labor and Birth

<http://www.childbirthgraphics.com/index.php/articles/hormones-of-labor-and-birth/>

The key to a spontaneous, ecstatic labor is
simply to avoid whatever interferes with
oxytocin production

Endorphins

- Produced in response to pain and stress
- Endorphins have calming and pain-relieving effects
- As labor progresses and pain intensifies, endorphin levels steadily increase in **unmedicated** labors.
- Endorphins have natural *morphinelike* effects, decreasing the perception of pain and creating an altered state of consciousness. As a result, a woman in labor shifts into a more instinctive mindset, which facilitates her ability to cope with the birth process. She is able to "go into the zone" and focus on the work of labor. [1]
- Fetal neuroprotection from hypoxia (animal studies) [2]
- After labor, high endorphin levels can help a woman feel alert and attentive as she greets her newborn and initiates breastfeeding.
- Most studies have found a sharp drop in endorphin levels with use of epidural or opioid pain medication. [3]

[1] Hormones of Labor and Birth

<http://www.childbirthgraphics.com/index.php/articles/hormones-of-labor-and-birth/>

[2] Hormonal Physiology of Childbearing

<http://childbirthconnection.org/pdfs/CC.NPWF.HPoC.Report-ExecutiveSummary.2015.pdf>

[3] Hormones Driving Labor and Birth

<http://www.childbirthconnection.org/article.asp?ck=10184>

Adrenaline

- the "**fight or flight**" hormone
- It is secreted in response to stress, fear, and extreme pain
- If a woman feels threatened during labor, such as by fear or extreme pain, she may produce too much adrenaline, which can impede labor
- In a **natural birth** right before delivery, a surge of adrenaline provides the woman with a rush of energy, stimulating contractions and activating the fetal ejection reflex.
- At birth, high adrenaline levels allow the baby to be wide-eyed and alert when meeting the mother for the first time and helping in the initiation of breastfeeding. [1]
- Adrenaline can slow labor or stop it altogether. Earlier in human evolution, this disruption helped birthing women move to a place of greater safety. [2]

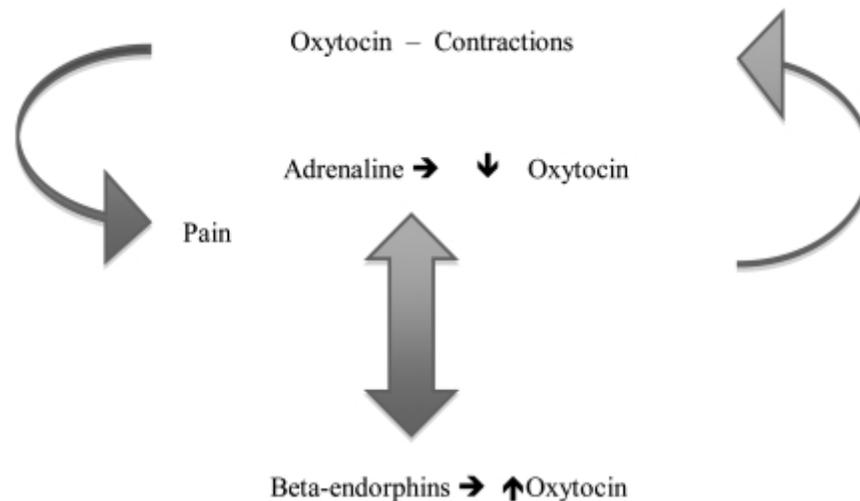
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Oxytocin-Pain-Adrenaline-Endorphin cycle



- When oxytocin is released by the laboring mother and her baby, the intensity of uterine contractions increases.
- As the pain increases, adrenaline, a stress hormone, is released and inhibits oxytocin release.
- At the same time, the mother's endorphins rise and the pain is modulated. The adrenaline decreases and more oxytocin is released.
- This cycle repeats with larger and larger amounts of oxytocin and endorphins, working to advance the process of labor and birth.

What steps to take to help ensure these hormones work well?

- Being informed and prepared
- Having trust and confidence in your body and your capabilities as a birthing woman
- Staying calm, comfortable
- Avoiding disturbances, such as unwelcome people or noise and uncomfortable procedures
- Staying upright and using gravity to apply your baby against your cervix and then, as the baby is born, against the tissues of your pelvic floor
- Engaging in nipple or clitoral stimulation activities before birth and giving your baby a chance to suckle shortly after birth
- Delaying or avoiding epidural or opioids as a pain relief method
- Use a leisurely bath, aromatherapy, candles or music

Hormones Driving Labor and Birth

<http://www.childbirthconnection.org/article.asp?ck=10184>

Sphincter law

- Sphincter Law explain how women's bodies function and how the environment can either open the cervical sphincter and allow the baby to be born or close the cervix and make it more difficult for the baby to move through the birth canal.
- Sphincters are shy and function best in privacy.
- “How well could you poop on demand or without privacy, or on a timetable?”
- When the mother feels safe and cared for, her body will respond, the sphincters will open, and her baby will be born with less stress for everyone.

Barbara A. Hotelling “From Psychoprophylactic to Orgasmic Birth”
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2776526/>

The basics of Sphincter Law

- Excretory, cervical, and vaginal sphincters function best in an atmosphere of intimacy and privacy—for example, a bathroom with a locking door or a bedroom, where interruption is unlikely or impossible.
- These sphincters cannot be opened at will and do not respond well to commands (such as “Push!” or “Relax”).
- When a person's sphincter is in the process of opening, it may suddenly close down if that person becomes upset, frightened, humiliated, or self-conscious. Why? High levels of adrenaline in the bloodstream do not favor (sometimes, they actually prevent) the opening of the sphincters.
- *The state of relaxation of the mouth and jaw is directly correlated to the ability of the cervix, the vagina, and the anus to open to full capacity.*
- The cervix opens well to laughter, deep abdominal breathing, warm water baths, kissing, and expressions of love

Barbara A. Hotelling “From Psychoprophylactic to Orgasmic Birth”

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Sex in labour

- Birth is a sexual act, and often having sex in labor helps facilitate the process. When a woman is sexually stimulated, oxytocin flows through her system causing her uterus to contract, either in the form of orgasms or labor contractions.
- The other benefit to having sex in labor (other than it feels good!) comes in the form of *relaxin*. Relaxin is a hormone found in the seminal fluid of mammals (men included). Studies have shown it softens the cervix and lengthens the pelvic ligaments, allowing for easier passage of the baby. (In the hospital, many women are given prostaglandin inserts which contain relaxin)

Sex in labour

<http://www.unassistedchildbirth.com/sex-in-labor/>

Stereotypes

- People are often skeptical of the concept of pleasure during birth
- Some see the idea of sexual feelings during childbirth as unacceptable
- "People see 'birth' and 'orgasmic' together on paper, and it pushes all their buttons on sexuality"

Childbirth educator Debra Pascali-Bonaro

- Shame of telling the fact: "Doctor, I gave birth with you three years ago, and I had a very orgasmic birth, with an orgasm, but what makes you think I would tell you?"
- "It's such a culture where some women actually feel shamed that they have pleasure, because the expectation is pain. **We have to change that.**"

Why not give to young women and men in the context of sexuality and life skills courses, as well as in the area of reproductive rights, a way of approaching childbirth as ***an empowering event of life?***



Debra Pascali-Bonaro

Debra Pascali-Bonaro "Orgasmic Birth: The Best-Kept Secret"
<http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/cms/assets/uploads/2008/02/Orgasmic-Birth-review.pdf>

WHEN YOU CHANGE THE WAY YOU VIEW BIRTH,
THE WAY YOU BIRTH WILL CHANGE.
— MARIE MONGAN



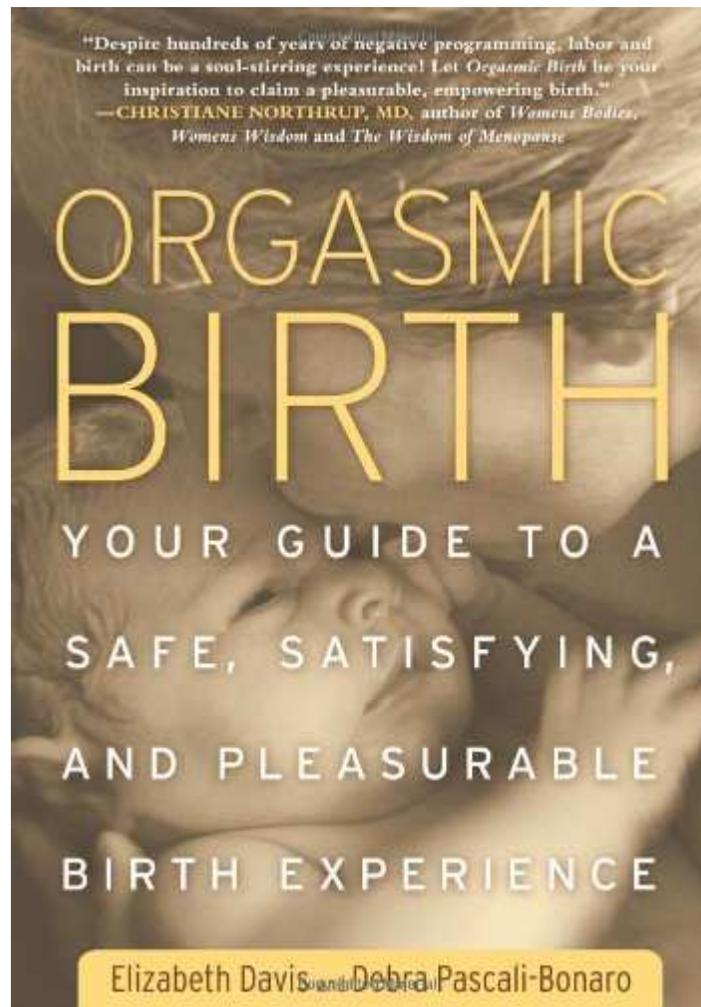
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