

Does Occupation Affect Prolonged Labor Pain? A National Study of Women in India

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Abstract

Introduction: Childbirth is a transformative experience in a woman's life, marked by both joy and pain. Labor pain is a common and expected part of the childbirth process. However, the duration and intensity of labor pain can vary among women. Prolonged labor pain, in particular, can be a challenging aspect of childbirth. This study aims to identify whether there is any association between a woman's occupation and prolonged labor pain in the context of India, a diverse nation with a wide range of occupations and healthcare practices.

Material and Methods: The current study used National Family Health Survey 5 data from all over India, reproductive age (15-49 years) encompassing 176,385 women from different occupational categories, socio-economic backgrounds, and geographical locations. Data on labor pain duration and intensity, as well as factors such as age, education, socio-economic status, religion, and wealth index were collected through structured interviews, medical records, and self-reporting. Cross tabulation, chi-square tests and multivariate logistic regression were used for analysis.

Results: 40.5% of women reported prolonged labor pain. Among them majority (38.8%), minority (0.4%) belongs to 25-29 and 45-49 age group respectively. 78.6% of rural and 21.4% of urban women experienced prolonged labor pain. Women having secondary education reported highest rate of prolonged pain (53.8%), while those with primary education had the lowest rate (12%). Hindus experienced a higher rate of prolonged labor pain (76.2%) compared to Muslims (13.3%). The wealth index, showed that poorer women had the highest rate of prolonged labor pain (22.8%), while the richest experienced lowest rate (15.1%). Though cross tabulation explored that non-working women experienced highest percentage (73.3%), while women in clerical 2 occupations reported the least pain (0.4%), but logistic regression revealed certain occupations 1. Professional/ technical/ managerial (adj OR: 1.851, CI: 1.210-2.832), 2. Sales (adj OR: 1.412, CI: 1.198-1.664) and 3. Services/ household and domestic (adj OR: 1.204, CI: 1.118-1.297) more likely experienced prolong labor pain than women who are nonworking.

Conclusion: Study revealed prolong labor pain associated with occupation. Policy maker can consider the current findings for better preventive planning. The factors associated with prolong labor pain identified in the study should be considered with appropriate weightage.