Abstract

BACKGROUND: The use of the pelvic floor muscle training for urinary incontinence treatment is well established but little is known about its effects in labor and newborn outcomes. OBJECTIVES: To evaluate the effects of antenatal pelvic floor muscle training and strength in labor and newborn outcomes in low-income pregnant women. METHODS: This is a randomized controlled trial that recruited forty-two nulliparous healthy pregnant women aged between 18-36 years old and able to contract the pelvic floor muscles. The participants were included in the study with 20 weeks of gestational age and had their pelvic floor muscles measured by vaginal squeeze pressure. They were randomly allocated into two groups: training group and a non-intervention control group. Then, all participants had their labor and newborn outcomes evaluated through consultation of medical records by a blinded researcher. RESULTS: There were no statistically significant differences between the groups regarding gestational age at birth, type of labor, duration of the second stage of labor, total time of labor, prevalence of laceration, weight and size of the baby, and Apgar score. No correlation was observed between pelvic floor muscle strength and the second stage or the total length of labor. CONCLUSIONS: This randomized controlled trial did not find any effect of pelvic floor muscle training or pelvic floor muscle strength on labor and newborn outcomes.

Keywords

Labor, newborn, pelvic floor, muscle training, physical therapy, randomized controlled trial.