Abstract # 266

Assessment of Pain Sensitivity in Healthy Pregnant Women

Abstract Type: Original Research
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There is a great variability in women’s response to obstetric epidural anesthesia as well as in amount of chronic peri-partum pain. It is reported that significant pain occurs in approximately 50% of pregnant women in the months preceding delivery [1-2]. This antepartum pain, including pelvic or lower back complaints, is not explained by objective physical markers or physical examination results. In 30% of women, painful symptoms continue for weeks to years after delivery [3-4]. We hypothesized that variation in obstetric anesthesia and labor-related pain may be related to overall individual pain sensitivity and be predicted by subject’s “sensory profile” identified with Quantitive Sensory Testing (QST). We also hypothesized that thresholds of experimental pain in late pregnancy differ from those at baseline.

In the present study we assessed the responses of healthy pregnant women to standard painful stimulation including thermal and mechanical stimuli. Pain threshold, tolerance and temporal summation (wind-up) data was collected at the 1st and last trimester of pregnancy, during the routine check-up visit. In addition we evaluated pain status and pain co-morbid traits including sleep and mood, using validated questionnaires. The poster will present the results of the comparative analysis of QST and survey data collected at the beginning of pregnancy and close to due date.