Continuous monitoring of babies’ heartbeats in labour aims to identify those babies who may be coping less well: steps can therefore be taken to reduce the likelihood of any problems. Continuous monitoring using telemetry involves the use of two flat discs attached to the woman’s abdomen. Information about the baby’s heart beat and mother’s contractions are sent to a main machine wirelessly, rather than with leads. A continuous record of the heartbeat and contractions is printed out. Using telemetry enables the woman to adopt whatever position she may choose (including the use of a birthing pool if appropriate) and may promote increased mobility and upright positions in labour.

**What do we know about telemetry?**

- National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommend that all women who have continuous monitoring in labour should be offered telemetry (2014).
- Survey of UK maternity units (Watson et al, 2014) found that 64% of responding units had at least one telemetry machine.
- There is no contemporary evidence regarding what influences the use of telemetry, or any possible impact telemetry may have on labour outcomes.
- There is a lack of evidence investigating the experience for women, including control and satisfaction in labour.

**What are the aims of the study?**

- Gain a deeper understanding of social processes influencing different ways of monitoring the fetal heart in labour.
- Gain a greater knowledge and understanding of telemetry use and contribute to improving women’s experiences and outcomes.
- Contribute to the provision of information for women, health professionals and commissioning stakeholders.

**What is the plan of work?**

- Perform a literature review of fetal monitoring and telemetry.
- Collect and analyse observation and interview data from women and midwives using telemetry in labour.
- Collect clinical data such as length of labour, use of pain relief and perceived control and satisfaction in labour from a group of women using telemetry.
- Combine both sets of data to draw conclusions on the use of telemetry and contribute to future work.

**Why is this study important?**

- This will be the first contemporary study of telemetry use in the UK, and broaden the understanding of using telemetry in labour.
- It will capture any effects that telemetry might have on labour outcomes.
- It will contribute to the use and development of guidelines and training for health professionals, and future work.

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