

# Alternative Birthing Positions

Chloe Ebers, Amanda Gebheim, and Jordan Mckay  
NSG 404: Fundamentals of Evidence Based Practice, Fall 2021

## Significance Statement

In laboring women delivering in the hospital, how does the lithotomy position compared to alternative birthing positions effect post-partum and/or neonatal trauma?

P- Laboring women delivering in the hospital

I- Positions other than the lithotomy position

C- Lithotomy position

O- Incidence of trauma

## Key Methodology

Research design and study purpose

1. An exploratory study/randomized study that explored the perceptions of mothers and midwife's perceptions of birthing positions and perineal trauma.

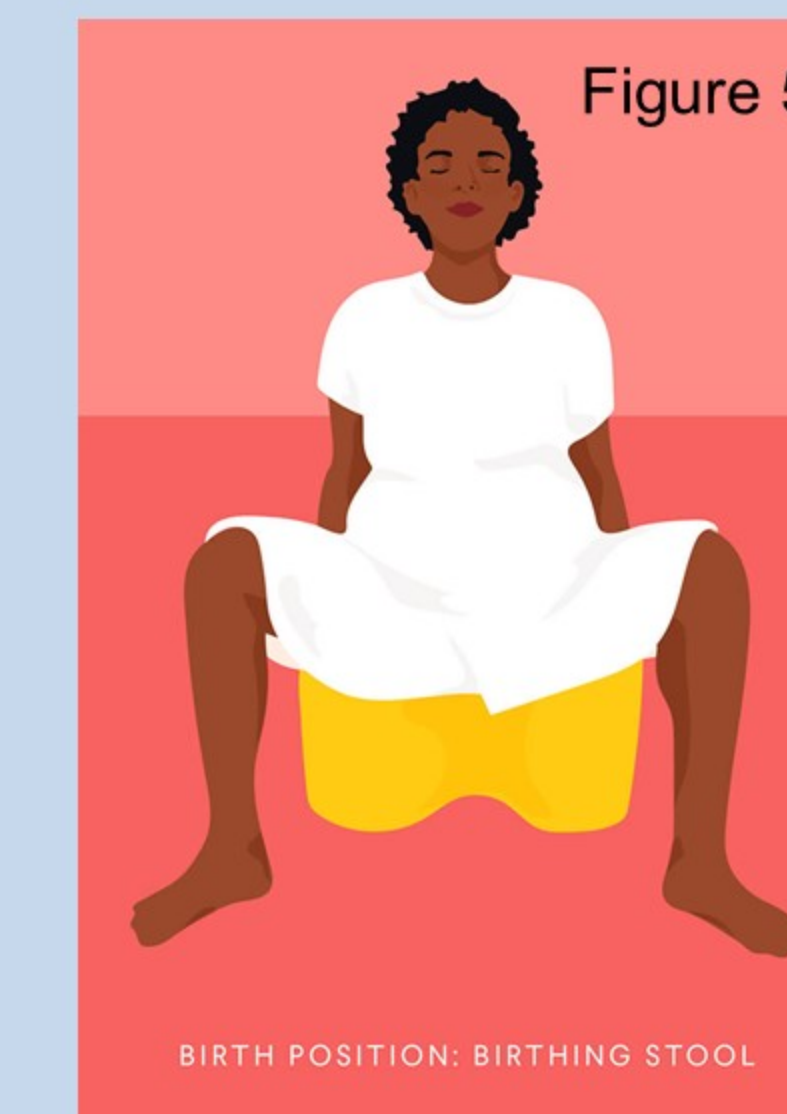
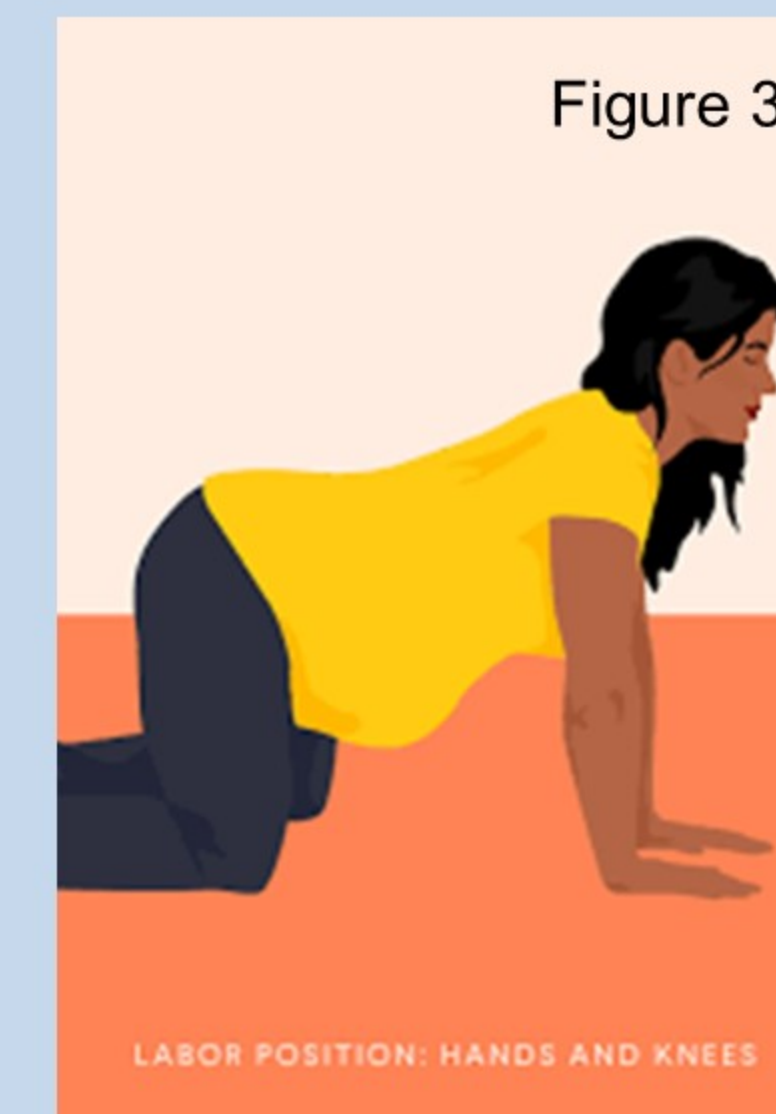
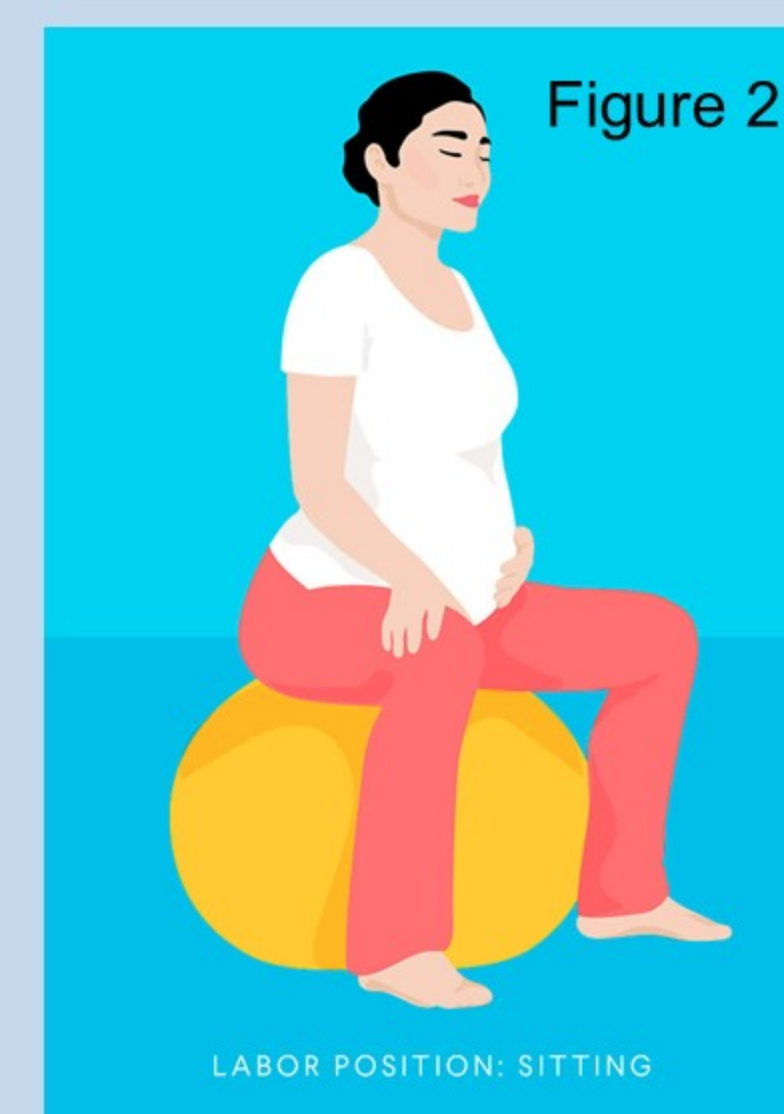
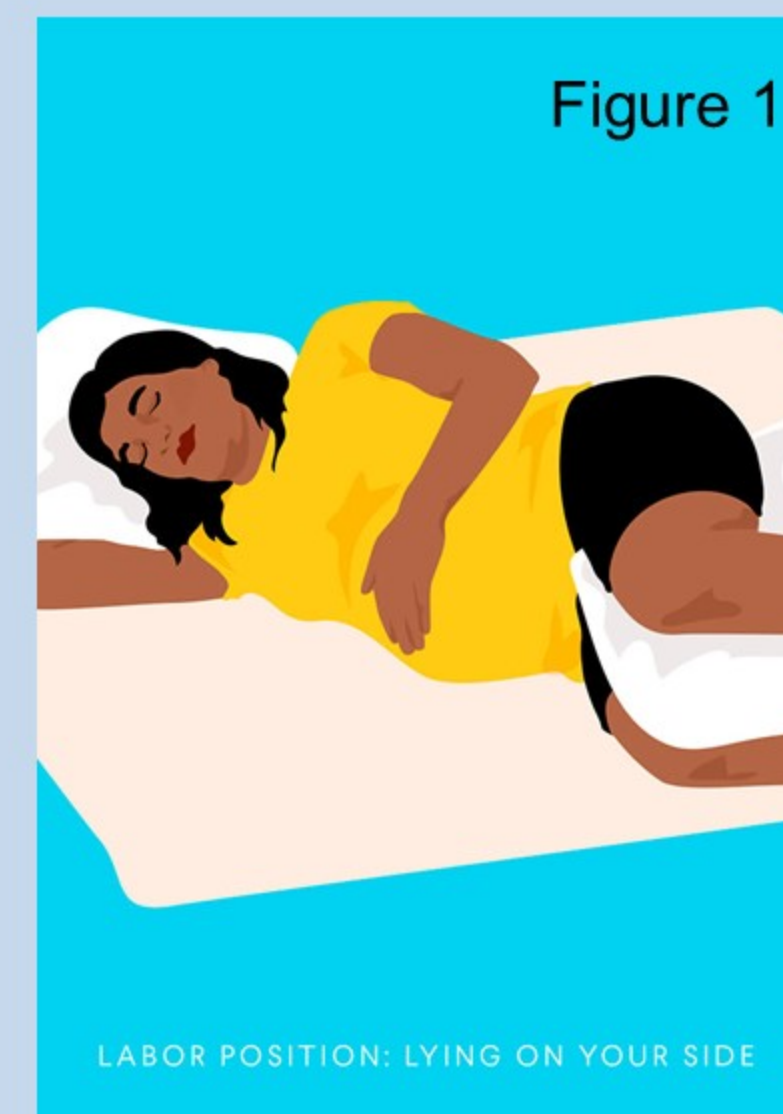
2. Retrospective cohort study that looked at the incidence and risk factors of third- and fourth-degree perineal tears with a secondary goal to identify risk factors.

3. Randomized control study that looked at childbirth experience associated with maternal and paternal stress during the first year of life.

4. Randomized control study that explores the outcomes between the hands and knees position and the supine position while having labor.

## Key Findings

- Mothers felt that the lithotomy position was not helpful, however midwives did perceive some benefits <sup>1</sup>
- Women were willing to change and consider other birthing positions. <sup>1</sup>
- Third- and fourth-degree perineal trauma are a result of obesity, instrumental delivery and fetal weight. <sup>2</sup>
- This analysis found evidence that the hands-and-knees position during the second stage of labor had lower rates of perineal trauma. <sup>4</sup>
- Having a mother birth in a position that she is comfortable in can influence a positive birth experience.
- Research supports that if the birthing process is stressful, not only for the mother but also for the father, there is an increased risk for attachment and bonding issues. <sup>3</sup>



## Recommended Key Practices

- If able, patients should use alternative birthing positions in order to decrease the risk of perineal trauma during labor. <sup>1-4</sup>
- Ensure that proper education on alternative positioning is provided to everybody on the interprofessional care team and is part of their continuous learning through biannual computer-based learning (CBL).
- Discuss patient preferences about different birthing options and what they would like to see happen during their birthing process.
- Be able to assess for appropriate use of different positions. Patients who receive epidural anesthesia do not qualify for positions that require them to hold their own weight with their legs.
- Educate patients in labor about the risks and benefits of alternative positioning and let them know the different options available.
- Educate patients on safety during alternative positioning and to alert staff of fatigue.

## References

1. Diorgu, F., Steen, M., Keeling, J., & Mason-Whitehead, E. (2016). Mothers and midwives perceptions of birthing position and perineal trauma: An exploratory study. *Women and birth : journal of the Australian College of Midwives*, 29(6), 518–523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2016.05.002>
2. Frigerio, M., Manodoro, S., Bernasconi, D., Verri, D., Milani, R., & Vergani, P. (2017). Incidence and risk factors of third- and fourth-degree perineal tears in a single Italian scenario. *European journal of obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive biology*, 221, 139–143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejogrb.2017.12.042>
3. Holopainen, A., Verhage, M., & Oosterman, M. (2020, September 08). Childbirth experience associated with maternal and paternal stress during the first year, but not child attachment. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11, 562394. doi: 10.3389/fpsyt.2020.562394
4. Zhang, H., Huang, S., Guo, X., Zhao, N., Lu, Y., Chen, M., . . . Cai, W. (2017, March 31). A randomised controlled trial in comparing maternal and neonatal outcomes between hands-and-knees delivery position and supine position in China. *Midwifery* 50, 117-124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2017.03.022>

Figure List

Figure 1-5. Cappetta, K. (2020). 13 Best Labor and Birthing Positions. Retrieved November 10, 2021, from <https://www.thebump.com/a/birthing-positions>.