More women with the pelvic girdle syndrome than with other pelvic pain during pregnancy had pelvic pain 2 years after delivery


QUESTION: In women with pregnancy-related pelvic joint pain, what are the predictors and prevalence of long term symptoms?

Design
Inception cohort followed for 2 years after delivery.

Setting
A university hospital in Denmark.

Patients
405 women at 33 weeks of gestation were classified into 5 subgroups on the basis of their history and objective pelvic joint pain (=1 positive test from a joint): the pelvic girdle syndrome (n=118; daily pain in all 3 pelvic joints); symphysiolysis (n=38; daily pain in pubic symphysis only); the 1-sided sacroiliac syndrome (n=98; daily pain from 1 sacroiliac joint alone); the double-sided sacroiliac syndrome (n=120; daily pain from both sacroiliac joints); or miscellaneous (n=31; daily pain in ≥1 pelvic joint, but inconsistent findings from the history). Patients with no objective evidence of pelvic joint pain or those with the same or lower intensity of pelvic joint or low back pain as before the pregnancy were excluded (n=1384). Follow up was 84%.

Assessment of prognostic factors
Epidemiological and obstetric background data and pain history obtained from a questionnaire and physical examination (pain tests and index of mobility). Demographic data (age, education, and employment history) were also assessed.

Main outcome measures
Painful joint pain (≥1 positive pain test result for ≥1 pelvic joint). Women were examined at 1, 3, 6, 12, 18, and 24 months after delivery or until symptoms disappeared — whichever occurred first. All women seen at 6 months of follow up were examined 6 months later.

Main results
Continued pelvic joint pain at 2 years occurred in 21 of the 100 women (21%) with the pelvic girdle syndrome who were followed; 0 of 33 (0%) with symphysiolysis; 1 of 82 (1.2%) with the 1-sided sacroiliac syndrome; 5 of 99 (5.1%) with the double-sided sacroiliac syndrome; and 2 of 27 (7.4%) with miscellaneous joint pain at baseline. No women with symphylosis had joint pain at 6 months after delivery. Prognostic factors associated with pelvic joint pain 2 years after delivery in women with the pelvic girdle syndrome were ≥16 positive responses on objective pain tests (relative risk [RR] 10.7); low index of mobility (≤320; RR 3.9); no education (RR 2.3); multiparity (RR 2.0); older age (≥29 y; RR 1.9); and high intensity of pain (≥6 on a visual analog scale; RR 1.6). No prognostic indicators existed for the other groups.

Conclusions
Among women with pregnancy-related joint pain, more women with the pelvic girdle syndrome had pelvic pain at 2 years after delivery than did women with other pelvic pain. Women with symphysiolysis had no joint pain 6 months after delivery.