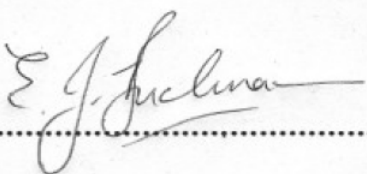


DECLARATION

I, Eckhart Johannes Buchmann, declare that this thesis is my own work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other university.


.....

..... 6 day of July 2007

In memory of my mother

Elisabeth Marie Buchmann

1.3.1926 – 6.4.2001

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Papers presented, related to the contents of this thesis:

Buchmann EJ. Fifths, station, sagittal moulding and lambdoid moulding – do they predict cephalopelvic disproportion? 25th Conference on Priorities in Perinatal Care in Southern Africa; Champagne Sports Resort, KwaZulu-Natal, 7-10 March 2006.

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ABSTRACT

Cephalopelvic disproportion (CPD) is a common and serious obstetric condition, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Recognition relies on clinical observations, such as cervical dilatation, head descent, moulding, and size of fetus, all made in a trial of labour. No prospective studies have investigated intrapartum clinical observations and their predictive value for CPD. The objectives of this research were 1) to determine the association of intrapartum clinical findings, especially level of head and moulding, with the outcome of CPD, 2) to determine inter-observer agreement of these findings between clinicians, and 3) to compare intrapartum clinical palpation with symphysis-fundal height (SFH) measurement in the prediction of birth weight.

A prospective cross-sectional comparative study was done in the Chris Hani Baragwanath labour ward, a large referral centre. The subjects were women at term, in the active phase of labour, with vertex presentations. The author, blinded to previous clinical or ultrasound findings, performed clinical assessments at the same time as the women's attending clinicians. His observations were not divulged to the clinicians and he did not participate in obstetric management of the women. The primary outcome measures were CPD, defined as caesarean section for poor progress, and birth weight.

Five hundred and eight women were examined, of whom 113 (22.2%) had CPD. Multivariate analysis identified short maternal stature, increased SFH, lesser cervical dilatation, long duration of labour, high degree of parieto-parietal moulding, and high degree of caput succedaneum as independent predictors for CPD. Fetal position and

occipito-parietal moulding were not predictive, and level of head, by fifths and by station, was poorly predictive. Inter-observer agreement between the author and attending clinicians was moderate for cervical dilatation, engagement of the head in fifths, and caput succedaneum, and poor for engagement of the head by station. SFH measurement was a slightly better predictor of birth weight than clinical fetal weight estimation.

The clinical observations that were shown to be predictive for CPD may be useful adjuncts in the management of a trial of labour. Inter-observer agreement of these findings is at best moderate. Measurement of SFH deserves more attention as an intrapartum predictor of birth weight.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
 CHAPTER 1.	
CEPHALOPELVIC DISPROPORTION – AN OVERVIEW	
1.1 DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION	1
1.2 DIAGNOSIS OF CPD: TRIAL OF LABOUR	3
1.3 CPD AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM	6
1.4 PREVALENCE OF CPD	7
1.5 PELVIC CONTRACTION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	9
 CHAPTER 2.	
ANTEPARTUM CLINICAL PREDICTORS OF CPD	
2.1 MATERNAL ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS	13
2.1.1. Maternal height	13
2.1.2. Shoe size	15
2.1.3. Maternal and paternal head to height ratio	16
 2.2 CLINICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE FETOPELVIC RELATIONSHIP	17
2.2.1. Clinical pelvic assessment	17
2.2.2. Non-engagement of the fetal head before labour	19
2.2.3. Head-fitting tests	21
2.2.4. Estimation of fetal weight	22

2.3. PELVIMETRY USING IMAGING TECHNOLOGY	22
2.3.1. X-ray pelvimetry	23
2.3.2. Other imaging methods	25

CHAPTER 3.

INTRAPARTUM PREDICTION AND RECOGNITION OF CEPHALOPELVIC DISPROPORTION

3.1. CERVICAL DILATATION AND CPD	28
3.1.1. Friedman's studies	28
3.1.2. Active management of labour	30
3.1.3. Philpott: alert and action lines	31
3.1.4. Accuracy and reproducibility – cervical dilatation	33
3.2. OCCIPITOPOSTERIOR POSITION	34
3.2.1. Calkins' study	35
3.2.2. Controversy about the occipitoposterior position	36
3.2.3. Accuracy and reproducibility – fetal position	39
3.3. FETAL HEAD DESCENT	40
3.3.1. Methods of estimating head descent	41
3.3.2. High head in labour	43
3.3.3. Station versus fifths in assessing head descent	47
3.3.4. Accuracy and reproducibility – fetal head descent	52
3.4. MOULDING	53
3.4.1. Mechanism of moulding	55
3.4.2. Grades of moulding and CPD	61
3.4.3. Accuracy and reproducibility – moulding	63
3.5. CAPUT SUCCEDANEUM AND OTHER CLINICAL SIGNS	63
3.5.1. Caput succedaneum	64
3.5.2. Flexion	65
3.5.3. Asynclitism	65
3.6. CLINICAL PELVIC ASSESSMENT	66

CHAPTER 4.

INTRAPARTUM ESTIMATION OF FETAL WEIGHT

4.1. FETAL WEIGHT ESTIMATION AND CPD	69
4.2. UTERINE MEASUREMENTS	71
4.2.1. Early studies	71
4.2.2. Correlation between SFH measurements and birth weight	74
4.2.3. Limitations of SFH measurement, and standardization	76

4.3.	UTERINE PALPATION	78
4.3.1.	Demographic, constitutional and pregnancy factors	79
4.3.2.	Uterine palpation versus ultrasound	81
4.4.	FACTORS AFFECTING ACCURACY	84
4.5.	MATERNAL ESTIMATION OF FETAL WEIGHT	86
4.6.	PREDICTING MACROSOMIA	87

CHAPTER 5.

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

5.1.	INTRODUCTION	91
5.1.1.	Antepartum prediction of CPD	91
5.1.2.	Cervical dilatation - trial of labour	92
5.1.3.	Clinical observations that may predict CPD	92
5.2.	RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES	93
5.2.1.	Cervical dilatation	93
5.2.2.	Head descent	94
5.2.3.	Moulding	94
5.2.4.	Occipitoposterior position	95
5.2.5.	Fetal weight estimation	95
5.2.6.	Clinical pelvic assessment	96
5.2.7.	Other observations	96
5.3.	OBJECTIVES	96
5.3.1.	Objective 1 - descent, moulding and other clinical findings	96
5.3.2.	Objective 2 – interobserver agreement of clinical findings	97
5.3.3.	Objective 3 – estimation of fetal weight	98

CHAPTER 6.

SETTING AND METHODS

6.1.	STUDY DESIGN	100
6.2.	SETTING	101
6.2.1.	The ideal setting	101
6.2.2.	Chris Hani Baragwanath Maternity Hospital	101
6.3.	STUDY POPULATION	103
6.4.	SAMPLING AND SAMPLE SIZE	104
6.5.	RECRUITMENT AND INFORMED CONSENT	105

6.6.	OUTCOME MEASURES	106
6.7.	INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	107
6.8.	DATA COLLECTION	107
6.8.1.	Shoe size, foot size and height	107
6.8.2.	Abdominal palpation and symphysis-fundal height	108
6.8.3.	Estimation of head descent	109
6.8.4.	The clinician's examination	111
6.8.5.	Vaginal examination	111
6.8.6.	Data capture	112
6.8.7.	Issues around blinding of clinical findings	113
6.9.	DATA ANALYSIS	114
6.9.1.	Predictors for CPD	114
6.9.2.	Interobserver agreement	115
6.9.3.	Estimation of fetal weight	115
CHAPTER 7.		
CEPHALOPELVIC DISPROPORTION: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION		
7.1.	THE STUDY SAMPLE	118
7.1.1.	Parity and gestation	118
7.1.2.	Weight and height	119
7.1.3.	Labour	119
7.1.4.	Mode of delivery and definition of CPD	121
7.1.5.	Birth weight and fetal outcome	122
7.2.	PREDICTORS FOR CPD	122
7.2.1.	Nulliparae	124
7.2.2.	Multiparae	125
7.2.3.	Multivariate analysis	129
7.2.4.	Maternal supine height	135
7.2.5.	Symphysis-fundal height	136
7.2.6.	Combination of maternal height and symphysis-fundal height	137
7.2.7.	Combination of moulding and level of fetal head	138
7.2.8.	Comparison of methods of estimating head descent	139
7.3.	DISCUSSION	141
7.3.1.	Blinded non-participant observation	142
7.3.2.	Parity	143
7.3.3.	Maternal weight, height and shoe size	144
7.3.4.	Estimates of fetal size, and gestational age	145
7.3.5.	Position and flexion of the fetal head	146
7.3.6.	Fetal head descent	147
7.3.7.	Moulding and caput succedaneum	150
7.3.8.	Cervical dilatation	151
7.3.9.	Duration of labour	152
7.4.	LIMITATIONS	152

CHAPTER 8.**INTEROBSERVER AGREEMENT: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

8.1.	THE ATTENDING CLINICIANS	157
8.2.	FETAL WEIGHT ESTIMATION	157
8.3.	CERVICAL DILATATION	158
8.4.	LEVEL OF THE HEAD	161
8.4.1.	Fifths of head	161
8.4.2.	Station	163
8.5.	FETAL POSITION	165
8.6.	MOULDING	167
8.7.	CAPUT SUCCEDANEUM	167
8.8.	DISCUSSION	168
8.8.1.	Cervical dilatation	168
8.8.2.	Level of the head	170
8.8.3.	Fetal position	171
8.8.4.	Moulding and caput succedaneum	172
8.9.	LIMITATIONS	173

CHAPTER 9.**ESTIMATION OF FETAL WEIGHT: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

9.1.	DISTRIBUTION OF BIRTH WEIGHTS	176
9.2.	FETAL WEIGHT ESTIMATION BY PALPATION	177
9.2.1.	Percentage error	177
9.2.2.	Simple linear regression	179
9.3.	SYMPHYSIS-FUNDAL HEIGHT MEASUREMENT	181
9.4.	ADDITIONAL PREDICTORS OF BIRTH WEIGHT	182
9.5.	PREDICTING THE MACROSOMIC BABY	186
9.5.1.	The author's estimation of fetal weight	186
9.5.2.	Symphysis-fundal height measurement	188
9.6.	DISCUSSION	188
9.7.	LIMITATIONS	192

CHAPTER 10.**CONCLUSION****196****REFERENCES****203**

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1. The contribution of obstructed labour to causes of maternal mortality	7
3.1. Labour graph showing arrest disorder of cervical dilatation	31
3.2. Transvaginal estimation of head descent using station	42
3.3. Transabdominal estimation of head descent using fifths of head palpable	42
3.4. Abdominal palpation for fifths of head above the pelvic brim	43
3.5. Misleading assessment of engagement using station	49
3.6. Exaggerated depiction of moulding	54
3.7. Lateral radiograph of a newborn after elective caesarean section	56
3.8. Lateral radiograph of a newborn after vaginal delivery	56
3.9. Composite diagram of lateral radiographs of moulded and unmoulded newborn heads	57
6.1. Map showing the location of Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital	102
6.2. Measurement of symphysis-fundal height with a tape-measure	109
6.3. The Notelowitz method of estimating level of head in fifths	110
6.4. Measurement of symphysis to sinciput using a tape measure	110
7.1. Receiver operated characteristic plots for four methods of estimating head descent	140
9.1. Scatter plot for estimated fetal weight by the author	180
9.2. Scatter plot for estimated fetal weight by the clinicians	181
9.3. Scatter plot for symphysis-fundal height	182
9.4. Receiver-operated characteristic plot for symphysis-fundal height	188
9.5. Scatter plot for symphysis-fundal height with regression lines	190

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.1. Assignment of diagnostic criteria for cephalopelvic disproportion in nulliparous women	5
3.1. Length of first and second stages of labour in Calkins' series	36
3.2. Comparison of caesarean section rates in studies reporting findings of unengaged and engaged fetal heads	45
3.3. Association between fetal head descent in fifths and outcome in women with poor labour progress	47
3.4. Grades of moulding at delivery associated with normal labour, primary uterine dysfunction, minor CPD and major CPD	63
4.1. Studies that reported intrapartum fetal weight estimations within 10% of birth weight	83
4.2. Studies reporting sensitivities and specificities for intrapartum detection of infants with birth weight $\geq 4\,000$ g	88
7.1. Comparison of supine height with standing height	120
7.2. Basic clinical data and labour outcomes for nulliparae and multiparae	123
7.3. Association of maternal demographics and measurements with CPD in nulliparae	124
7.4. Association of intrapartum clinical observations with CPD in nulliparae	126
7.5. Association of maternal demographics and measurements with CPD in multiparae	127
7.6. Association of intrapartum clinical observations with CPD in multiparae	128
7.7. Univariate and multivariate logistic regression analysis for clinical predictors of CPD using fifths as the measure of head descent	131
7.8. Stepwise logistic regression model showing independent predictors of CPD with fifths as the measure of head descent	132
7.9. Univariate and multivariate logistic regression analysis for clinical predictors of CPD using station as the measure of head descent	133

7.10.	Stepwise logistic regression model showing independent predictors of CPD with station as the measure of head descent	134
7.11.	CPD rates with percentages for unengaged vs. engaged heads by fifths estimation, at cervical dilation <7 cm and ≥ 7 cm	135
7.12.	CPD rates with percentages for unengaged vs. engaged heads by estimation of station, at cervical dilation <7 cm and ≥ 7 cm	135
7.13.	Intrapartum maternal supine height and CPD	136
7.14.	Intrapartum symphysis-fundal height measurement and CPD	136
7.15.	Positive predictive value and likelihood ratio for CPD, for a combination of short stature and high SFH	137
7.16.	Positive predictive value and likelihood ratio for CPD, for a combination of tall stature and small SFH	137
7.17.	Positive predictive value and likelihood ratio for CPD, for a combination of parieto-parietal moulding $\geq$ grade 2 and unengaged fetal head	138
7.18.	Positive predictive value and likelihood ratio for CPD, for a combination of parietoparietal moulding $<$ grade 2 and engaged fetal head	138
7.19.	Sensitivity, specificity, prevalence of CPD and likelihood ratio for fifths, symphysis-to-sinciput measurement and station	141
8.1.	Rank of clinicians that did the intrapartum examinations	158
8.2.	Agreement, underestimation and overestimation for cervical assessments by clinicians, compared to the author's assessments	159
8.3.	Clinicians' mean observed cervical dilatation using the author's estimated dilatation as the standard	159
8.4.	Percentage agreement in estimation of cervical dilatation between the author and the clinicians, using the author's estimation as the standard	160
8.5.	Univariate and multivariate ordinal regression analysis showing influence of independent variables on disagreement in estimation of cervical dilatation	161
8.6.	Clinicians' estimates of level of the head according to fifths against the author's estimates as the standard	163
8.7.	Interobserver agreement in terms of engagement of the head in fifths between the author and clinicians	163
8.8.	Clinicians' estimates of level of the head by station against the author's estimates as the standard	164

8.9.	Interobserver agreement in terms of engagement of the head by station between the author and clinicians	165
8.10.	Comparison of the author's and clinicians' findings of fetal position	165
8.11.	Fetal position findings of the author and clinicians in 30 patients who had suprapubic ultrasound scans to identify fetal position	167
8.12.	Comparison of the author's and the clinicians' findings of caput succedaneum	168
9.1.	Distribution of birth weights, in intervals of 500 g	176
9.2.	Percentage error of intrapartum estimated fetal weight with respect to birth weight, for author and clinicians	177
9.3.	Distribution of percentage error showing underestimation and over-estimation of fetal weight	178
9.4.	Mean percentage error in estimation of fetal weight for the author and Clinicians	179
9.5.	Univariate and multivariate linear regression for birth weight with Independent variables including estimated fetal weight by the author	183
9.6.	Stepwise linear regression showing partial r^2 of each clinical variable, including estimated fetal weight by the author	184
9.7.	Univariate and multivariate linear regression for birth weight with independent variables including symphysis-fundal height	185
9.8.	Stepwise linear regression showing partial r^2 of each variable, including symphysis-fundal height	186
9.9.	Two-by-two table for estimated fetal weight in the prediction of birth weight at a 4000 g cut-off	187
9.10.	Two-by-two table for symphysis-fundal height measurement of 40 cm in the prediction of birth weight at a 4000 g cut-off	187