

Persistent genito-pelvic pain 2 months after vaginal birth: a nationwide population-based study from the 2021 French National Perinatal Survey

AUTHORS: Rollet Clara^{1,2} RM, MSc; Chantry Anne Alice^{1,3} RM, PhD; Viaud Marie¹ RM, MSc; Lelong Nathalie¹ MSc; Le Ray Camille^{1,2} MD, PhD; Bonnet Marie-Pierre^{1,4} MD, PhD; on behalf of the ENP2021 Study Group.

AUTHORS' AFFILIATIONS: 1. Université Paris Cité, CRESS, Obstetric, Perinatal, Paediatrics Life Course Epidemiology Research Team (OPPaLE), INSERM, Paris. 2. Université Paris Cité, Port Royal Maternity Unit, Cochin Hospital, AP-HP, Paris. 3. Université Paris Cité, Midwifery University Department, Paris. 4. Sorbonne Université, Department of Anaesthesiology, Intensive Care and Perioperative Medicine, Armand-Trousseau Hospital, DMU DREAM, AP-HP, GRC29, Paris.

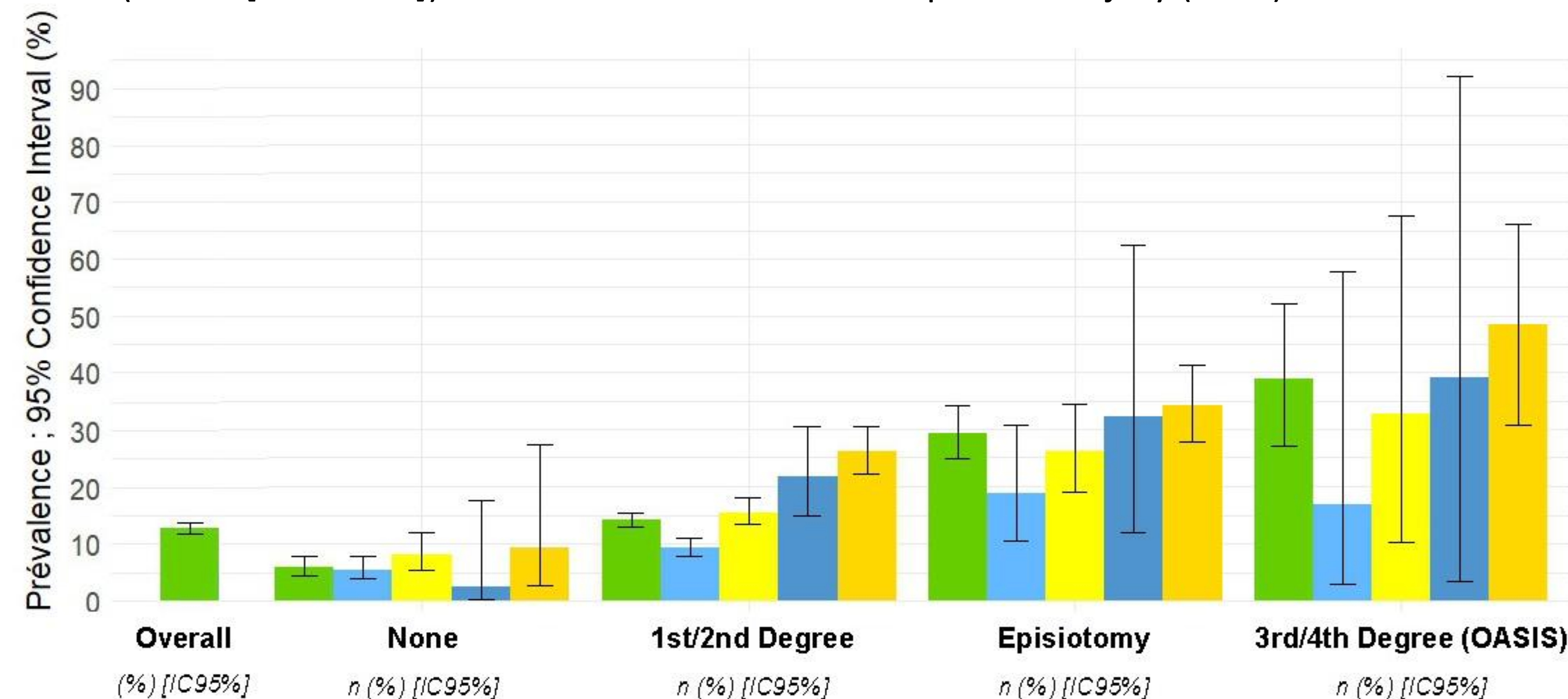
Background: Beyond the feeling of pain in itself, persistent pain after childbirth can have a significant impact on maternal health outcomes, particularly on maternal well-being, mental health and the ability to care for a newborn baby. Effective prevention is therefore essential and relies on a comprehensive understanding of its risk factors. In contrast to caesarean section, representative data on persistent pain after vaginal birth are lacking.

Objectives: This study aimed to assess the prevalence and risk factors for persistent genito-pelvic pain two months after vaginal birth using population-based data.

Methods: Data were obtained from the 2021 National Perinatal Survey, a French nationwide cross-sectional population-based survey. The study population included women who delivered vaginally. The main outcome was persistent genito-pelvic pain at two months postpartum, assessed by a self-reported questionnaire. Its prevalence was estimated overall and according to parity and degree of perineal tear at birth. Risk factors for postpartum persistent genito-pelvic pain were identified using univariable and multivariable logistic regression. All analyses were weighted to account for 2-month attrition.

Prevalence of persistent genito-pelvic pain at 2 months overall and according to perineal tear, parity and mode of birth

This study included 5,802 women who delivered vaginally. The overall prevalence of persistent genito-pelvic pain at 2 months postpartum was 12.8% (95%CI [11.8-13.8%]), ranging from 5.9% (95%CI [4.3-7.9%]) in women with an intact perineum to 38.9% (95%CI [27.1-52.2]) in those with obstetric anal sphincter injury (OASIS).



STRENGTHS and LIMITATIONS

- Original and relevant data
- Focus on vaginal birth
- Nationwide population-based data
- Large and representative sample with sufficient power for subgroup analysis
- No postpartum pain scores, no data on pain management or injury progression
- No validated and standardized scales to assess psychological state or childbirth experience
- 2-month response rate of 61% but weighted analyses to account for attrition

CONCLUSION and PERSPECTIVES

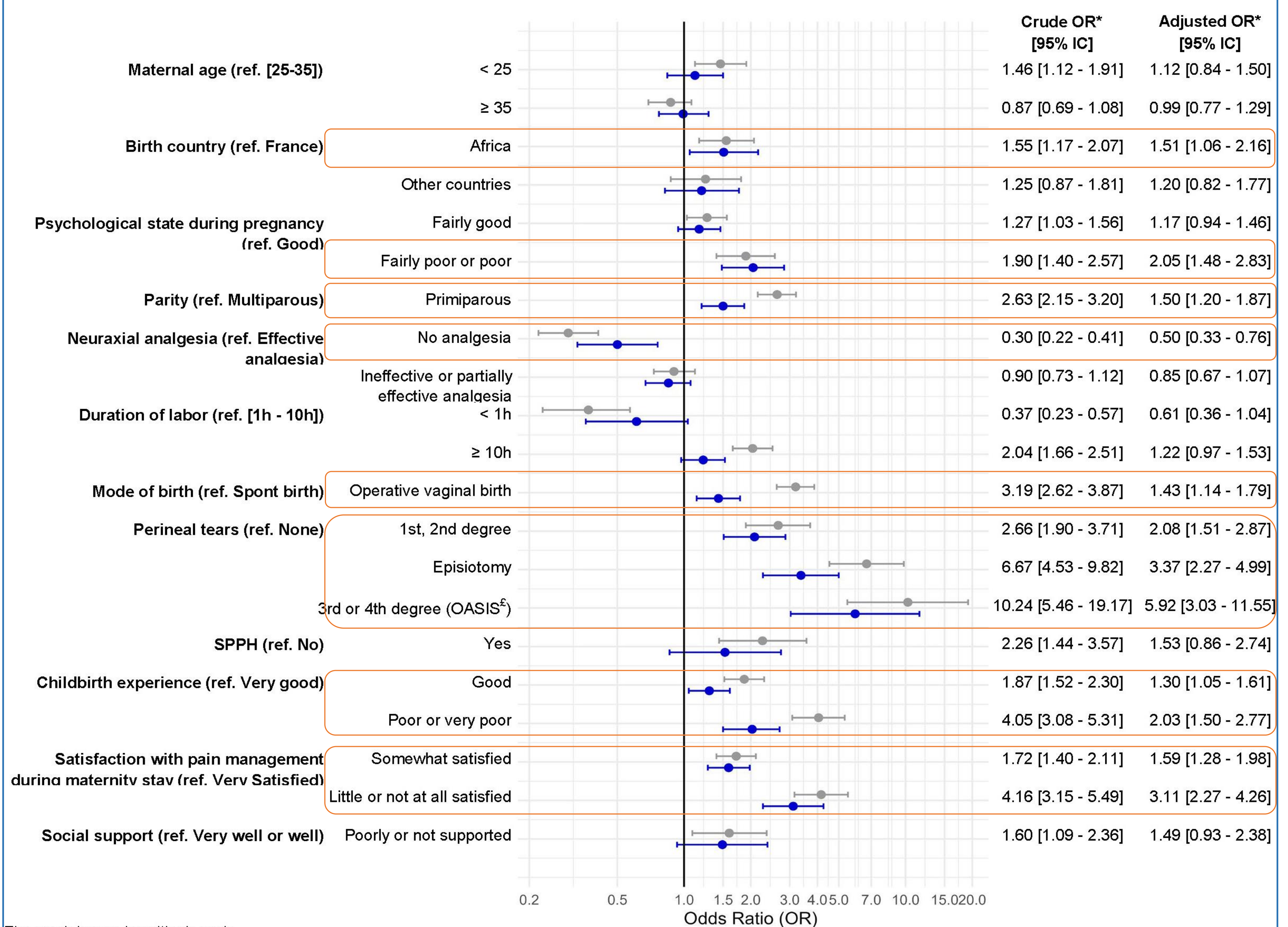
Persistent genito-pelvic pain at two months postpartum after vaginal delivery:

- affects **1 in 10 women**
- increases with **the severity of perineal injury**

To reduce this pain, it is necessary:

- to prevent perineal injuries and operative births as much as possible
- To improve women's satisfaction during their maternity stay, probably by optimizing postpartum analgesic management.

Risk factors for persistent genito-pelvic pain at 2 months among maternal, pregnancy, labour, birth and postpartum characteristics



The graph is on a logarithmic scale

* weighted

£ OASIS : Obstetrical Anal Sphincter Injuries

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