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Early umbilical cord clamping risky

Source: University of Granada

When should the umbilical cord be clamped?

MedWire News: Clamping the umbilical cord early is not justified and may do more harm than good, research shows.

Recently there has been a trend towards clamping the umbilical cord immediately after the baby is expelled instead of letting the blood flow stop naturally.

But Catalina de Paco Matallan, from the University of Granada, says that this new practice lacks studies to confirm its benefits.

She analyzed the umbilical cords of 151 newborns from full-term pregnancies, 79 were cut within 20 seconds and 72 cut within 2 minutes of the baby being expelled.

Umbilical cords cut a few seconds or a few minutes after birth contained similar amounts of hematocrit or hemoglobin.

It also took a similar amount of time to remove the placenta among babies with early and late clamping and there was no difference in the mother's bleeding after birth.

De Paco Matallana says this means her study "has not found any scientific evidence to suggest that the practice of early clamping is advisable or to justify the abandonment of late clamping in newborns from full-term pregnancies."

Early clamping also meant that babies were more likely to need oxygenotherappay after birth.

De Paco Matallana concludes: "There are convincing findings for and against the two different types of clamping analyzed in this study, which shows not only the complexity of the problem, but also that research in this field may not be controlled enough or designed correctly."

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