

# Effects of LI4 acupressure on labor pain in the first stage of labor.

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## Abstract

### INTRODUCTION:

Complementary and alternative medicines have been used to decrease labor pain for many years. Despite reports that some of these methods reduce pain, increase maternal satisfaction, and improve other obstetric outcomes, they have received limited attention in the US medical literature. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of LI4 acupressure on labor pain in the first stage of labor, on labor duration, and on patient satisfaction.

### METHODS:

A single, blind, randomized clinical trial was performed with eligible women (N = 100) who were at the beginning of the active phase of labor (3-4 cm dilatation of cervix with regular uterine contractions). The women in the acupressure group (n = 50) received LI4 acupressure at the onset of the active phase for the duration of each uterine contraction over a period of 20 minutes, and the women in the control group (n = 50) received a touch on this point without massage. Labor pain was measured using a structured questionnaire of a subjective labor pain scale (visual analogue scale) before the intervention, immediately after the intervention, 20 and 60 minutes after the intervention, and then every hour.

### RESULTS:

There were significant differences between the groups in subjective labor pain scores immediately and 20, 60, and 120 minutes after intervention ( $P \leq .001$ ). Active phase duration (3-4 cm dilatation to full dilatation) and second stage duration (full dilatation to birth) were shorter in the acupressure group. The women in the acupressure group reported greater satisfaction.

### DISCUSSION:

LI4 acupressure was effective at decreasing pain and duration of labor. The participants were satisfied, and no adverse effects were noted.

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