**Comparison of Epidural Techniques for Labour Analgesia: Information Sheet**

You are being given this sheet because you may ask for an epidural for your labour pain at BC Women’s Hospital. This sheet will provide you with information about one of our ongoing research studies.

More than 50% of women in Canada had an epidural for labour pain last year. Epidurals can be given using two different techniques (epidural technique or CSE technique) which have both been shown to be safe. When the epidural technique is used, an epidural needle is used to insert a tube through which medication is given in the epidural space only. In a CSE technique, a tube is inserted in the same way, but a fine spinal needle is used to make a microscopic hole that connects the epidural and spinal spaces, and pain medication can be injected directly into the spinal fluid. In this study we will be doing a CSE without injecting pain medication into the spinal space, so we can compare the techniques instead of the medication given. Studies have shown that having a hole between the epidural and spinal spaces may allow the pain medicine to spread more evenly, giving equal or better pain relief, faster and with less medication, and may have fewer side effects than doing the CSE and injecting medication.

If you agree to take part in this study, the only change to your care will be that you will be randomly selected to get either the epidural or CSE technique for your pain. This means there is a higher chance than normal that you will receive a CSE. The CSE will be done without injecting pain medication through the spinal needle. Normally, if you were not part of the study, the technique would be chosen by your anesthesiologist based on several factors including his or her preference.

We want to find out whether there is a difference in the amount of pain medicine needed during labour between the two different techniques.

We hope that you will be interested in being a part of this study. Our goal is to help increase the knowledge of anesthesiologists so that they can provide better care for their patients.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you are interested, one of our study team members will come and speak to you and your partner or family to explain it in more detail.

Thank you,

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