Contents

*Foreword to the Fourth Edition*  
$\text{xvii}$

*Acknowledgments*  
$\text{xx}$

**Chapter 1: Introduction**  
Penny Simkin, BA, PT, CCE, CD(DONA)  
and Ruth Ancheta, MA, ICCE, CD(DONA)

Causes and prevention of labor dystocia: a systematic approach  
$\text{1}$

Differences in maternity care providers and practices in the united kingdom, the united states, and canada  
$\text{5}$

Notes on this book  
$\text{5}$

Changes in this fourth edition  
$\text{6}$

A note from the authors on the use of gender-specific language  
$\text{6}$

Conclusion  
$\text{7}$

References  
$\text{7}$

**Chapter 2: Normal Labor and Labor Dystocia: General Considerations**  
Penny Simkin, BA, PT, CCE, CD(DONA)  
and Ruth Ancheta, MA, ICCE, CD(DONA)

What is normal labor?  
$\text{10}$

What is labor dystocia?  
$\text{14}$

Why does labor progress slow down or stop?  
$\text{15}$

Prostaglandins and hormonal influences on emotions and labor progress  
$\text{17}$

“Fight-or-flight” and “tend-and-befriend” responses to distress and fear during labor  
$\text{19}$

Optimizing the environment for birth  
$\text{21}$

The psycho-emotional state of the woman: wellbeing or distress?  
$\text{21}$

Pain versus suffering  
$\text{21}$

Assessment of pain and distress in labor  
$\text{22}$

Assessment of women’s ability to cope with the pain  
$\text{23}$

Psycho-emotional measures to reduce suffering, fear, and anxiety  
$\text{24}$

Before labor, what the caregiver can do  
$\text{24}$

During labor: tips for caregivers and doulas, especially if meeting the laboring client for the first time in labor  
$\text{26}$
An integrated philosophy on caring for trauma survivors 27
   Trauma histories: why they matter 27
   Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and trauma in adulthood 27
   Traumatic births 28
   Trauma-informed care as a universal precaution 31
Physical and physiologic measures to promote comfort and labor progress 32
   During labor: physical comfort measures 32
   During labor: physiologic measures 32
   Why focus on maternal position? 33
Techniques to elicit stronger contractions 35
Maintaining maternal mobility while monitoring contractions and fetal heart 36
   Auscultation 36
   When EFM is required: options to enhance maternal mobility 37
      Continuous EFM 37
      Intermittent EFM 39
      Wireless telemetry 40
Conclusion 42
References 42

Chapter 3: Assessing Progress in Labor 49
Wendy Gordon, LM, CPM, MPH, Suzy Myers, LM, CPM, MPH, with contributions by Gail Tully, BS, CPM, CD(DONA) and Lisa Hanson, PhD, CNM, FACNM
Before labor begins 50
   Fetal presentation and position 50
      Abdominal contour 52
         Location of the point of maximum intensity (PMI) of the fetal heart tones via auscultation 53
   Leopold’s maneuvers for identifying fetal presentation and position 55
      Abdominal palpation using Leopold’s maneuvers 55
      Estimating engagement 58
Malposition 62
   Influencing fetal position prior to labor 62
   Identifying those fetuses likely to persist in an OP position throughout labor 63
   Influencing fetal position during labor 63
Other assessments prior to labor 64
   Estimating fetal weight 64
   Assessing the cervix prior to labor 64
The Bishop scoring system 65
Assessments during labor 66
   Visual and verbal assessments 66
      Hydration and nourishment 66
      Psychology 67
Contents

Chapter No.: 3
Title Name: Simkin
Page Number: ix

Quality of contractions 68
External assessments 69
Vital signs 69
Quality of contractions 69
Abdominal palpation (Leopold’s maneuvers) 70
Assessing the fetus 70
Gestational age 71
Meconium 71
Fetal heart rate (FHR) 71
Internal assessments 75
Vaginal examinations: indications and timing 77
Performing a vaginal examination during labor 77
Assessing the cervix 79
Assessing the presenting part 81
The vagina and bony pelvis 87
Putting it all together 87
Assessing progress in the first stage 87
Features of normal latent phase 88
Features of normal active phase 88
Assessing progress in the second stage 88
Features of normal second stage 88
Conclusion 89
References 89

Chapter 4: Prolonged Prelabor and Latent First Stage 95
Penny Simkin, BA, PT, CCE, CD(DONA) and Ruth Ancheta, MA, ICCE, CD(DONA)

The onset of labor: key elements in diagnosis 96
Prelabor vs labor: the dilemma for expectant parents 96
Symptoms that differentiate prelabor from early labor 97
The six ways to progress in labor—prelabor to birth 99
The Bishop Score 100
Use of the “Six Ways to Progress” and the Bishop Score to help parents differentiate prelabor from labor 100
Prolonged prelabor and latent phase of labor 101
Can prenatal actions prevent some postdates pregnancies, prolonged prelabors, or early labors? 102
Prenatal preparation of the cervix for dilation 102
Attention to fetal factors that may prolong early labor 107
Optimal fetal positioning: prenatal features 107
Prenatal assessment and correction of suboptimal maternal musculoskeletal variations 109
The woman who has hours of latent labor contractions without dilation 109
Support measures for women who are at home in prelabor and the latent phase 109
Some reasons for excessive pain and duration of prelabor or the latent phase 112
Iatrogenic factors 112
Cervical factors 112
Other soft tissue (ligaments, muscles, fascia) factors 113
Emotional factors 113
Troubleshooting measures for painful prolonged prelabor or latent phase 114
Measures to alleviate painful, non-progressing, non-dilating contractions in prelabor or the latent phase 115
Synclitism and asynclitism 116
Open knee–chest position 119
Closed knee-chest position 120
Side-lying release 120
Conclusion 121
References 121

Chapter 5  Prolonged Active Phase of Labor 125
Penny Simkin, BA, PT, CCE, CD(DONA),
Ruth Ancheta, MA, ICCE, CD(DONA),
and Lisa Hanson, PhD, CNM, FACNM

What is active labor? Description, definition, diagnosis 126
When is active labor prolonged? 127
Observable characteristics of prolonged active labor 127
Possible causes of prolonged active labor 128
Fetal and fetopelvic factors 129
Malposition, macrosomia, malpresentation, and cephalopelvic disproportion 129
Persistent asynclitism 130
Occiput posterior 130
How fetal malpositions delay labor progress 132
Problems in diagnosis of fetal position during labor 133
Artificial rupture of the membranes with a malpositioned fetus 134
Specific measures to address and correct problems associated with a “poor fit”—malposition, cephalopelvic disproportion, and macrosomia 135
Maternal positions and movements for suspected malposition, cephalopelvic disproportion, or macrosomia 135
Forward-leaning positions 136
Side-lying positions 138
Asymmetrical positions and movements 140
Abdominal lifting 142
An uncontrollable premature urge to push 143
If contractions are inadequate 145
Immobility 145
Chapter No.: 3 Title Name: Simkin 0002884837.INDD

 Contents  xi

Medication  147
Dehydration and fear of dehydration  147
Overhydration—excessive oral and/or intravenous fluids  148
Exhaustion  149
Uterine lactic acidosis as a cause of inadequate contractions  149
When the cause of inadequate contractions is unknown  150
Breast stimulation  150
Walking and changes in position  151
Acupressure or acupuncture  151
Hydrotherapy (baths and showers)  151

If there is a persistent anterior cervical lip or a swollen cervix  153
Positions to reduce an anterior cervical lip or a swollen cervix  153
Other methods  154
Manual reduction of a persistent cervical lip  155

If emotional dystocia is suspected  155
Assessing the woman’s coping  155
Western cultural attitudes on coping with labor  155
Relaxation, Rhythm, and Ritual: The essence of “coping” during the first stage of labor  155

Indicators of emotional dystocia during active labor  156
Predisposing factors for emotional dystocia  157
Helping the woman state her fears  157
How to help a laboring woman in distress  158
Special needs of childhood abuse survivors  159
Incompatibility or poor relationship with staff  161
If the source of the woman’s anxiety cannot be identified  161
Conclusion  162
References  162

Chapter 6 Prevention and Treatment of Prolonged Second Stage of Labor  167
Penny Simkin, BA, PT, CCE, CD(DONA), Lisa Hanson, PhD, CNM, FACNM, and Ruth Ancheta, MA, ICCE, CD(DONA)

Definitions of the second stage of labor  168
Phases of the second stage of labor  168
The latent phase of the second stage  169
Avoid directing the woman to push during the latent phase of the second stage  170
What if the latent phase of the second stage persists?  171
The active phase of the second stage  171
Support of spontaneous bearing down  171
Physiologic effects of prolonged breath-holding and straining  172
Effects on the woman  172
Effects on the fetus  172
Chapter 3  
Possible etiologies and solutions for second stage dystocia  
Maternal positions and other strategies for suspected occiput posterior or persistent occiput transverse fetuses  
Why not the supine position?  
Differentiating between pushing positions and birth positions  
Leaning forward while kneeling, standing, or sitting  
Squatting positions  
Asymmetrical positions  
Lateral positions  
Supported squat or “dangle” positions  
Other strategies for malposition and back pain  
Manual interventions to reposition the occiput posterior fetus  
Early interventions for suspected persistent asynclitism  
Positions and movements for persistent asynclitism in second stage  
Nuchal hand or hands at vertex delivery  
If cephalopelvic disproportion or macrosomia (“poor fit”) is suspected  
The influence of time on cephalopelvic disproportion  
Fetal head descent  
Positions for suspected “cephalopelvic disproportion” (CPD) in second stage  
The use of supine positions  
Use of the exaggerated lithotomy position  
Shoulder dystocia  
If contractions are inadequate  
If emotional dystocia is suspected  
The essence of coping during the second stage of labor  
Signs of emotional distress in second stage  
Triggers of emotional distress unique to the second stage  
Conclusion  
References  

Chapter 7  
Optimal Newborn Transition and Third and Fourth Stage Labor Management  
Lisa Hanson, PhD, CNM, FACNM, and Penny Simkin, BA, PT, CCE, CD(DONA)  
Overview of the normal third and fourth stages of labor for unmedicated mother and baby  
Third stage management: care of the baby  
Oral and nasopharynx suctioning  
Delayed clamping and cutting of the umbilical cord  
Management of delivery of an infant with a tight nuchal cord
Chapter 8  Low-Technology Clinical Interventions to Promote Labor Progress 231
Lisa Hanson, PhD, CNM, FACNM

Intermediate-level interventions for management of problem labors 232
  When progress in prelabor or latent phase remains inadequate 232
    Therapeutic rest 232
    Nipple stimulation 233
    Management of cervical stenosis or the “zipper” cervix 233
  When progress in active phase remains inadequate 234
    Artificial rupture of the membranes (AROM) 234
    Digital or manual rotation of the fetal head 235
      Digital rotation 236
      Manual rotation 237
    Manual reduction of a persistent cervical lip 238
    Reducing swelling of the cervix or anterior lip 238
Fostering normality in birth 239
  Perineal management 239
    Prenatal perineal massage 239
    Perineal management during second stage 240
    Verbal support of spontaneous bearing-down efforts 240
    Maternal birth positions 241
    Guiding women through crowning of the fetal head 241
    Hand skills to protect the perineum 242
    Differentiating perineal massage from other interventions 243
  When progress in second stage labor remains inadequate 243
    Duration of second stage labor 243
      Precautionary measures 245
      Warning signs 246
      Shoulder dystocia maneuvers 246
      The McRoberts’ maneuver 247
      Suprapubic pressure 248
      The Gaskin maneuver 249
      Somersault maneuver 249

Contents

Third stage management: the placenta 216
  Physiologic (expectant) management of the third stage of labor 217
  Active management of the third stage of labor 218
The fourth stage of labor 221
  Keeping the mother and baby together 221
Baby-friendly (breastfeeding) practices 222
Supporting microbial health of the infant 223
Routine newborn assessments 225
Conclusion 226
References 227
Non-pharmacologic and minimally invasive pharmacologic techniques for intrapartum pain relief 251
Acupuncture 251
Sterile Water Injections 252
Procedure for subcutaneous sterile water injections 253
Nitrous oxide 254
Topical anesthetic applied to the perineum 254
Conclusion 254
References 255

Chapter 9 Epidural and Other Forms of Neuraxial Analgesia for Labor: Review of Effects, with Emphasis on Preventing Dystocia 260
Penny Simkin, BA, PT, CCE, CD(DONA)

Introduction:analgesia and anesthesia—an integral part of maternity care in many countries 261
Neuraxial (epidural and spinal) analgesia—new terms for old approaches to labor pain? 261
Physiological adjustments that support fetal growth and wellbeing 262
Multisystem effects of epidural analgesia on labor progress 263
The endocrine system 263
The central nervous system and peripheral nervous system (sensory, motor, and autonomic, including the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems) 264
The musculoskeletal system 265
The genitourinary system 266
Can changes in labor management reduce problems of epidural analgesia? 266
1. Inform the woman ahead of time 266
2. Shorten the duration of exposure 267
3. Treat the woman as much as possible like a person who does not have an epidural 267
4. Attend to the woman’s emotional needs 272
Restoring women to a central role 273
Conclusion 274
References 274

Chapter 10 The Labor Progress Toolkit Part 1: Positions and Movements 277
Penny Simkin BA, PT, CCE, CD(DONA) and Ruth Ancheta MA, ICCE, CD(DONA)

Maternal positions and how they affect labor 278
Side-lying positions 279
Pure side-lying and semiprone (exaggerated Sims’) 279
The “semiprone lunge” 284
Side-lying release 285
Sitting positions 288
  Semisitting 288
  Sitting upright 289
  Sitting leaning forward with support 290
  Standing, leaning forward 292
Kneeling positions 293
  Kneeling, leaning forward with support 293
  Hands and knees 295
  Open knee–chest position 296
  Closed knee–chest position 298
Asymmetrical upright (standing, kneeling, sitting) positions 299
Squatting positions 300
  Squatting 300
  Supported squatting (“dangling”) positions 302
  Half-squatting, lunging, and swaying 304
  Lap squatting 306
Supine positions 308
  Supine 308
  Sheet “pull-to-push” 309
  Exaggerated lithotomy (McRoberts’ position) 310
Maternal movements in first and second stages 312
  Pelvic rocking (also called pelvic tilt) and other movements of the pelvis 312
  Hip sifting 314
Flexion of hips and knees in hands and knees position 315
  The lunge 316
  Walking or stair climbing 317
  Slow dancing 318
Abdominal lifting 320
  Abdominal jiggling with a rebozo 321
  The pelvic press 323
  Other rhythmic movements 324
References 326

Chapter 11  The Labor Progress Toolkit
Part 2: Comfort Measures 327
Penny Simkin, BA, PT, CCE, CD(DONA)
and Ruth Ancheta, MA, ICCE, CD(DONA)

Introduction: the state of the science regarding non-pharmacologic, complementary, and alternative methods to relieve labor pain 328
General guidelines for comfort during a slow labor 328
  Non-pharmacologic methods to relieve labor pain 328
Non-pharmacologic physical comfort measures 330
  Heat 330
  Cold 331
Contents

Hydrotherapy 333
Touch and massage 337
  How to give simple brief massages for shoulders and back, hands, and feet 338
Acupressure 343
Acupuncture 344
Continuous labor support from a doula, nurse, or midwife 345
  How the doula helps 345
  What about staff nurses and midwives as labor support providers? 346
Psychosocial comfort measures 347
  Assessing the woman’s emotional state 348
Techniques and devices to reduce back pain 350
Counterpressure 350
  The double hip squeeze 351
  The knee press 353
Cook’s counterpressure technique No. 1: ischial tuberosities (IT) 354
Cook’s counterpressure technique No. 2: perilabial pressure 355
Techniques and devices to reduce back pain 357
Cold and heat 357
Cold and rolling cold 358
Warm compresses 359
Hydrotherapy 359
Maternal movement and positions 360
Birth ball 360
  Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) 362
Sterile water injections for back pain 364
Breathing for relaxation and a sense of mastery 364
  Simple breathing rhythms to teach on the spot in labor 365
Bearing-down techniques for the second stage 366
  Spontaneous bearing down (pushing) 366
Self-directed pushing 367
Directed pushing 367
Conclusion 367
References 368

Index 371