

**MISOPROSTOL**  
**FOR THE**  
**INDUCTION OF LABOUR AT TERM**

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy, March 2005**

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

PG	prostaglandin
HPMC	hydroxy propyl methyl cellulose
HPLC	high pressure liquid chromatography
RIA	radio immune assay
mg	milligrams
mcg	micrograms
mL	millilitres
RCT	randomised controlled trial
RR	relative risk
OR	odds ratio
NNTH	number needed to treat to harm
95% CI	95% confidence intervals
IOL	induction of labour
GA	gestational age
ARM	artificial rupture of membranes
SROM	spontaneous rupture of membranes
PROM	premature rupture of membranes
PE	pre-eclampsia
HT	hypertension
IUGR	intra-uterine growth restriction
APH	antepartum haemorrhage
CTG	cardiotocograph
MSL	meconium stained liquor
EDB	epidural block
NVD	normal vaginal delivery
CS	caesarean section
PPH	postpartum haemorrhage
NICU	neonatal intensive care unit

# ABSTRACT

## **Background:**

The aims of this randomised, double blind, placebo controlled trial were to compare vaginal PGE<sub>2</sub> gel with oral misoprostol in the induction of labour at term.

## **Methods:**

Women randomised to the oral misoprostol group received 20mcg oral misoprostol solution at two hourly intervals and placebo vaginal gel, and those in the vaginal prostaglandin group received vaginal PGE<sub>2</sub> gel at six hourly intervals and oral placebo solution.

The primary outcome measures were vaginal birth not achieved in 24 hours, uterine hyperstimulation with associated fetal heart rate changes, and caesarean section.

Women were asked about their preferences for care, and a cost comparison was performed for the two methods of induction of labour. A nested randomised trial compared health outcomes for the woman and her infant related to morning or evening admission for commencing induction of labour.

## **Results:**

A total of 741 women were randomised, 365 to the misoprostol group and 376 to the vaginal PGE<sub>2</sub> group.

There were no differences between women in the oral misoprostol group and women in the vaginal PGE<sub>2</sub> group, for the outcomes vaginal birth not achieved in 24 hours (Misoprostol 168/365 (46.0%) versus PGE<sub>2</sub> 155/376 (41.2%); RR 1.12 95% CI 0.95-1.32; p=0.134), caesarean section (Misoprostol 83/365 (22.7%) versus PGE<sub>2</sub> 100/376 (26.6%); RR 0.82 95% CI 0.64-1.06; p=0.127), or uterine hyperstimulation with fetal

heart rate changes (Misoprostol 3/365 (0.8%) versus PGE<sub>2</sub> 6/376 1.6%); RR 0.55 95% CI 0.14-2.21; p=0.401).

Women in the misoprostol group were more likely to indicate that they “liked everything” associated with their labour and birth experience compared with women in the vaginal PGE<sub>2</sub> group (Misoprostol 126/362 (34.8%) versus PGE<sub>2</sub> 103/373 (27.6%); RR 1.26; 95% CI 1.02-1.57; p=0.036).

There were no differences in the primary outcomes when considering morning or evening admission to commence induction.

The use of misoprostol was associated with a saving of \$110.83 per woman induced.

### **Conclusions:**

The use of oral misoprostol in induction of labour does not lead to poorer health outcomes for women or their infants, women express greater satisfaction with their labour and birth experience, and with misoprostol induction there is a cost saving to the institution.

## **DECLARATION**

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university or tertiary institution, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to a copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopy.

Jodie Dodd

March 2005

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must begin by thanking the 741 women who have selflessly participated in this clinical research project, in the hope of improving health care for women and their infants.

I first encountered my supervisors Professors Jeffrey Robinson and Caroline Crowther, as a 4<sup>th</sup> year medical student. Their enthusiasm for research and clinical obstetrics inspired me then, and more recently have shaped my career path. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to have them both as mentors and colleagues, and hope that in the future I might emulate the high standards they set as clinicians, researchers, and teachers.

A project like this doesn't happen without the assistance and support of many, and I would like to say an enormous thank you to the following people.

- Sheree Agett (research midwife) – for her fantastic efforts with recruitment, data collection, follow-up of postnatal questionnaires, and the preparation of treatment packs.
- Judy Coffey and the midwifery team on delivery suite – for their incredible support, without which this trial would not have been possible.
- The midwives in antenatal clinic, and the obstetric medical staff – for promoting the trial in a positive way to eligible women.
- Professor Gus Dekker and the staff at the Lyell McEwin Health Service, and Dr Dirk Ludwig and the staff of the Hervey Bay Hospital, for their support and involvement in the trial.
- Kristyn Willson – for her statistical assistance, advice, and patience in dealing with a novice in the realms of statistical programming.
- Staff in the Maternal & Perinatal Clinical Trials Unit – for their support and willingness to share the highs and lows that life has to offer.
- The Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, The University of Adelaide –for the opportunity to study in such a great department (and for the desk with the wonderful view across the park).

Any research project requires funding and I would like to thank the following institutions for their financial assistance.

- The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, The University of Adelaide for financial assistance and provision of support services.
- The Women's and Babies Division of the Women's and Children's Hospital, for meeting the cost of drugs.
- The South Australian & Northern Territory branch of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists for their generous donation of \$2,500 for consumable items.
- Mayne Health for the provision of the Mayne Women's Health Fellowship, through the Research Foundation of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.
- The Women's and Children's Hospital Research Foundation for the provision of a Postgraduate Medical Scholarship, and Project Grant to facilitate research into women's and infant's health.

There are a few more people who have been instrumental in shaping the person I am, and whose love and support is immeasurable.

- Thank you to my family and friends – your support means everything.
- Thank you to Mum, Dad and Nana – you have always supported me in everything I have done and for this I am so grateful. I hope that you are proud of my achievements, and of the person you have helped me to become.
- Thank you to Greg – you are my best friend, my lover and my soul mate. I thank you for your unending belief in me and in my ability, for your constant support and encouragement, and for being the person who makes life so worthwhile.

## **AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION**

I have been responsible for the development of the original protocols, submission of these protocols to Research and Ethics Committees, and obtaining funding for the project. I have devised the information sheets and data sheets, and have coordinated in-service education sessions for midwifery and medical staff. I have been involved in the preparation of treatment packs, recruitment at the Women's and Children's Hospital, data collection at that site, checking of all data forms and data entry. I have received statistical advice and software programme assistance from Kristyn Willson, but the interpretation and any errors therein are my responsibility.