

TITLE: Evaluation of a Volunteer Doula Program: Analysis of Maternal Characteristics, Conditions, and Birth Outcomes

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: policy makers, maternal child health researchers

ABSTRACT: PDX Doulas is a non-profit organization that provides intrapartum doula services to OHSU patients on weekends. Characteristics and birth outcomes of patients served by PDX Doulas were compared to Oregon vital statistics from 2012 to 2016. Birthing persons who received PDX Doula support had lower odds of cesarean section ($p=0.0001$) and higher odds of a vaginal birth ($p<0.0001$) or vaginal birth after cesarean ($p<0.0001$) as compared to all birthing persons in the state. They had higher odds of an induction or augmentation ($p=0.0122$) but lower odds of utilizing epidural or spinal anesthesia ($p<0.0001$). Patients who received support from PDX Doulas did not differ by gestational diabetes status ($p=0.5180$), hypertensive status ($p=0.0837$), or by age ($p>0.85$). However, the estimated proportion of Hispanic patients and non-Hispanic white patients in the study population differed from the reported state population ($p=0.0441$; $p<0.0001$). Volunteer doulas were evaluated by birthing persons, birthing partners, nurses, midwives, and doctors on helpfulness of labor support. An estimated 92.6% of evaluators found PDX Doulas to be a big help in their overall usefulness. PDX Doulas has the potential to improve outcomes for birthing persons, to reduce disparities in underserved populations, and is well received by many stakeholders.

OBJECTIVE(S): Differentiate the characteristics of race, ethnicity and age between the population of birthing persons served by PDX Doulas with all birthing persons in Oregon.

Compare maternal conditions, characteristics of labor and delivery, and characteristics of method of delivery between birthing persons served by PDX Doulas and all birthing persons in Oregon.

Define who the primary stakeholders are in the provision of labor doula support in a hospital setting.

Assess labor doula support for both birthing persons and birthing partners in terms of the doula scope of practice.

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