

## PREFACE

Pain relief during labour, though once frowned upon and regarded as contrary to the commandments of God, is today looked upon almost as a sine qua non for the parturient woman. Of all the available techniques of providing analgesia, epidural blockade is probably the most certain and the most effective. Its many merits and advantages have long been recognised by doctors both in North America and the United Kingdom and is being used with increasing frequency today for the relief of pain in labour.

The introduction of any technique to a less developed country should be viewed against the background of social attitudes, cost and availability of equipment and drugs, problems of medical staffing and supervision, and of course, the enthusiasm of those involved in this field. This presentation describes the introduction and practice of epidural analgesia in the Labour Ward at the University Hospital of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.

The aims of this project are two-fold - firstly, to offer the patient in labour pain relief if she so desires, and secondly, to provide training in the technique and art of epidural blockade for residents in anaesthesia and obstetrics.

## Material and Methods

Thirty-two (32) patients were studied. The technique was explained to the patient in the first stage of labour and offered to her.

Once informed, consent was obtained, a radio-opaque Teflon 19-gauge catheter was then inserted into the epidural space through the 3rd and 4th lumbar interspace and local anaesthetic solution injected at periodic intervals to provide pain relief. The catheter was removed in the post-partum period. All patients were interviewed and any complications noted.