

Continuing dentistry during pregnancy

Lower back pain needn't compromise your ability to work for nine months. Tomas Davies explains how the Bambach Saddle Seat encourages a neutral, healthy posture

Lower back pain is one of the most common complaints during pregnancy with studies suggesting that up to 56% of women suffering from the symptom at some point in their pregnancy. In more than a third of reported cases, it is seen as being a severe problem, which not only compromises their ability to work, but also interferes with their normal daily life.

This can be especially significant for dental professionals who, due to the nature of their work, spend extended periods of time in a static sitting posture and are therefore at an even greater risk of developing back problems during pregnancy.

As a foetus grows and develops in the womb, it places increasing stresses on the mother's body, which have significant affect on her balance and ability to move around.

The increase in both size and weight in the pelvic area of the abdomen brings about a dramatic change in the bodies centre of gravity. This leads to rotation or forward tilt of the pelvis which inadvertently leads the woman shifting her upper body back 'over the pelvis' to restore her centre of gravity and balance. This increases the lumbar lordosis, which is the curve at the bottom of the back and places the spine in a hyper-extended position. Over time this posture places the spine at a biomechanical disadvantage that can lead to increased strain on the soft tissue surrounding the spine and the inter-vertebral disks.

This increased strain is further exacerbated by an increased laxity of the joints of the spine and pelvis. This is necessary to allow the expansion of the uterus and abdomen to accommodate the growing baby and is achieved by an increase in water retention, particularly of the connective tissue around the spine and pelvis that increases laxity around these joints and an increase in the natural hormone relaxin, which further relaxes the tissues and ligaments of the abdomen.

Muscle spasm

This can lead to an exaggerated hyper-extended posture that may lead to muscle spasm in the lower back, disc herniation, compression and degeneration of the facet joints of the spine and pain from strained pelvic ligaments. In addition, rotational movements put

great strain on pelvic ligaments that lead to pain.

So how can dental professionals avoid back pain during pregnancy and continue working comfortably and pain free?

Regular aerobic exercise and general conditioning exercise such as walking, cycling, swimming or water aerobics are effective in increasing mobility, muscle tone and length and at decreasing the effects of fatigue. Throughout the day one should ensure frequent position changes and stretching exercises and particular attention should be paid to your sitting posture. The demands placed on Dental professionals means that they spend long periods of their working day in static sitting positions that often place extreme demands on the musculoskeletal system and further predispose the individual to back pain.

Conventional flat seating often results in a collapsed or flexed spinal posture – due to increased tension across the hip joint caused by sitting with the hips at a 90 degree angle. Over time this results in the pelvis rocking backwards into a posterior tilt position that subsequently leads to a rounding of the spine and a flattening of the lumbar lordosis.

This poor posture is further exacerbated when leaning forward to treat patients. The result is stress – not only on the spinal discs but on the soft tissue around the spine this can cause damage over time. This also places increased compression on the chest and abdomen and can significantly increase the risk of the development of back pain during pregnancy.

Swivel action

The Bambach Saddle Seat promotes a healthy working posture. By supporting and maintaining the pelvis in its natural upright position the natural lumbar pelvic rhythm ensures the spine is maintained in a neutral healthy upright posture.

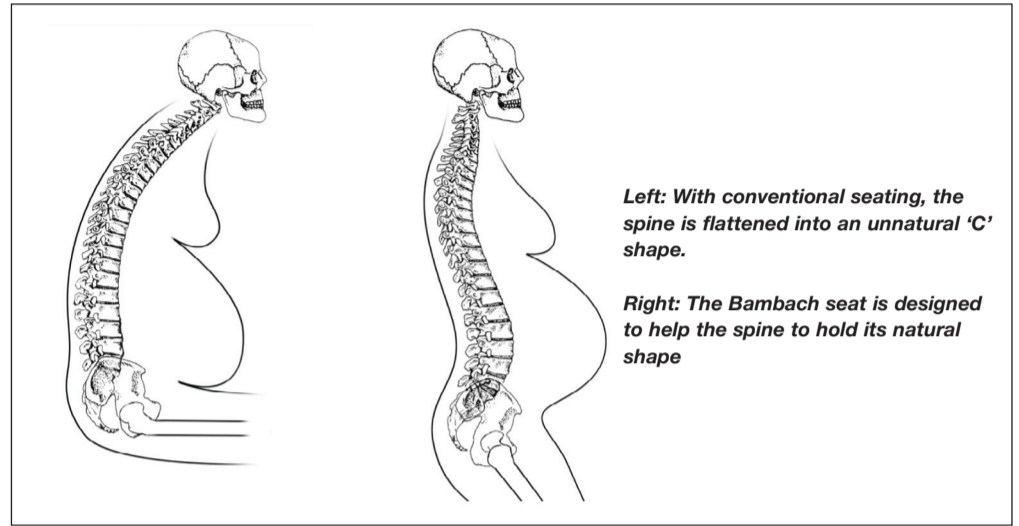
This allows the individual to maintain a balanced healthy posture and limits the decreased pelvic stability synonymous with pregnancy. The Bambach Saddle Seat also eliminates rotational movements by its swivel action. It provides easy movement around the workplace by allowing the sitter to use the feet rather than pulling themselves around by

the hands. This will also help foot and leg muscles to be active and avoid swelling.

This seat is seen by physiotherapists and occupational therapists as ideal for seated work and has been embraced by dentists as an ideal dental stool.

In pregnancy the body is under even more stress that can be greatly relieved by using the Bambach Saddle Seat.

The Bambach could play a significant role in reducing the risk of back pain during pregnancy, allowing the dentist to continue working as normal. ■



Left: With conventional seating, the spine is flattened into an unnatural 'C' shape.

Right: The Bambach seat is designed to help the spine to hold its natural shape

Treat Yourself (Before you treat your patients)

Treat yourself to a free 30 day trial of the original Bambach Saddle Seat.

And treat yourself for that nagging back pain. For those pins and needles in your feet and fingers. For those aching shoulders, headaches and that feeling of tiredness at the end of a day in surgery.

At some stage in their career, 80% of dentists suffer from those kind of pains, resulting from a poor working posture. Back pain is also the reason for early retirement for almost 30% of dentists forced to do so. Fortunately, the Bambach Saddle Seat has been proved to help.

Independent research has shown that "dental students using a Bambach Saddle Seat were able to maintain an acceptable working posture... and [that] this seating may reduce the development of work-related musculoskeletal disorders."¹ That's because, by helping your pelvis attain its preferred neutral position, the Bambach Saddle Seat ensures your spine naturally maintains its stress-free and pain-free 'S' shape.

Why not try one in your surgery, absolutely free, for 30 days? There's no trick. It's just a treat for your whole body.



Conventional seating collapses your spine into an unnatural 'C' shaped curve.

The Bambach Saddle Seat allows your spine to stay naturally, effortlessly, comfortably 'S' shaped.

AJA

AUSTRALIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION

Endorsed by the Australian Physiotherapy Association to help prevent musculoskeletal disorders

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¹Gandavadi A, Ramsay J R E, Burke F J T. Assessment of dental student posture in two seating conditions using RULA methodology - a pilot study. British Dental Journal 2007; 203: 601-605.

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It takes a genuine Bambach Saddle Seat to give you genuine support



Tomas Davies, MSc MCSP. Tomas is a Chartered Physiotherapist working with Bambach Saddle Seat. He is based in North Wales and has a consultancy role within the company. He also works in orthopaedic and sports injury rehabilitation settings.