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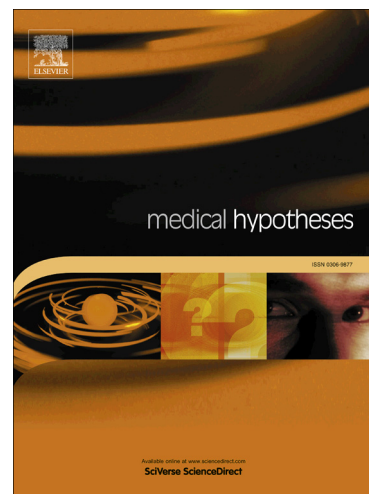
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## Effects of hypnosis during pregnancy: A psychophysiological study on maternal stress

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### Abstract

Because it induces a state of reduced awareness and deep relaxation, hypnosis is thought to be efficient at relieving stress and anxiety. This study examined whether hypnosis may alter the pattern and time evolution of maternal and fetal stress. Here we report a 23-yrs-old primigravida woman at 31-weeks' gestation who underwent daily sessions of hypnosis during one week. An A (baseline)-B (intervention) - A' (return to baseline) design was used. Each study phase lasted one week. The State Anxiety Inventory (SAI) was completed daily. Uterine contractions as well as maternal and fetal heart rate were recorded over 24-hour periods in each of the study phase. Uterine contractions and maternal systolic blood pressure showed clear reductions during the hypnosis phase. In addition, a statistically significant declining trend in anxiety scores was observed during the hypnosis phase, and anxiety re-increased in the return-to-baseline phase ( $p < .05$ ). Coefficient of variation of maternal heart rate was found to be considerably lower during the hypnosis phase. Our results suggest that a short-lived hypnosis intervention (combined with standard care) holds sufficient promise for antenatal stress relief to justify testing its efficacy in larger groups of pregnant women.

**Keywords**: complementary and alternative therapies, antepartum care, maternal and fetal stress.

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