Abstract
Around 20% of births in the United States today are induced, most frequently using Pitocin. Side effects include increased risks caesarean section, infection, uterine hyperstimulation, etc. Castor oil, a natural oil traditionally used by midwives, has been suggested as an alternative. A retrospective clinical chart review was conducted of all patients who birthed at the Charleston Birth Place located in Charleston, South Carolina between January 2007 and May 2015. 323 patients were identified who used castor oil for labor induction, and information from their birthing logs and EMR system was entered into a web-based (Qualtrics) information form. Descriptive statistics were analyzed for trends in safety and effectiveness. Of the 323 births with castor oil, only 30 (9.3%) resulted in a C-section, while 287 women (88.9%) gave birth vaginally at the birth place or hospital. The incidence of maternal side effects due to castor oil use was less than 7%, and less than 15% of births occurred with any complications. Independent sample t-tests revealed that gestation age (p=0.26), mother's age (p=0.23), and BMI (p=0.28) were not significantly associated with ability to successfully birth at the birth place after castor oil consumption. However, a t-test revealed significance differences among parity (p<0.01), suggesting women who were parous were more likely to birth at the birth center after using castor oil. Our study demonstrated the use of castor oil as a safe, natural, and effective way to induce labor.

Purpose
The purpose of this study was to understand the effectiveness of castor oil as a nonmedical agent of labor induction and provide further information regarding the safety and usefulness of castor oil as a natural alternative to Pitocin.

Conclusions
• Castor oil is safe and effective to use as a method to empower women to follow their desired birth plan of natural vaginal birth at a birth center
• As nearly 90% of women in the study who received castor oil were able to give birth vaginally, researchers stress the importance of the supervision of this highly effective method by a midwife or practitioner

Implications
• Castor oil may be used as a safe, natural alternative to stimulate labor and avoid unnecessary C-section
• Clinicians and midwives should utilize this alternative to empower women to birth naturally, avoiding negative birthing outcomes

Methods
May-July 2015
Data Collection/Study Population
• Retrospective clinical chart review of 1,606 CBP patients from January 2007-May 2015
• Two Qualtrics web-based surveys: one for data from birth logs and another for EMR
• 323 completed surveys for women using castor oil
July-August 2015
Data Analyses
• Descriptive statistics to analyze participant demographics and survey categories
• T-test to determine relationship between castor oil and labor induction

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