

# Perception of pain during misoprostol-induced medical abortion

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# Background

- medical abortion available in Finland since May 2000
- usually up to 9 weeks
- woman decides the method after information
- in 2007, 63% of all abortions were medical
- paracetamol 1000 mg + codeine 30 mg mostly used pain prophylaxis

# Study design

Family Planning Clinic, Helsinki University Central Hospital

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Health Centre of City of Vantaa

- misoprostol 200 mg + misoprostol 400  $\mu$ g 1-3 days at the hospital
- paracetamol 1 g + codeine 30 mg prior to misoprostol
- check-up at the local nurse after 2-3 weeks

# Study design

- 56 women choosing medical abortion
- mean age 26.2 years (15-43)
- length of pregnancy in US 47 days (32-63)
- 29 (51.7 %) nulliparous

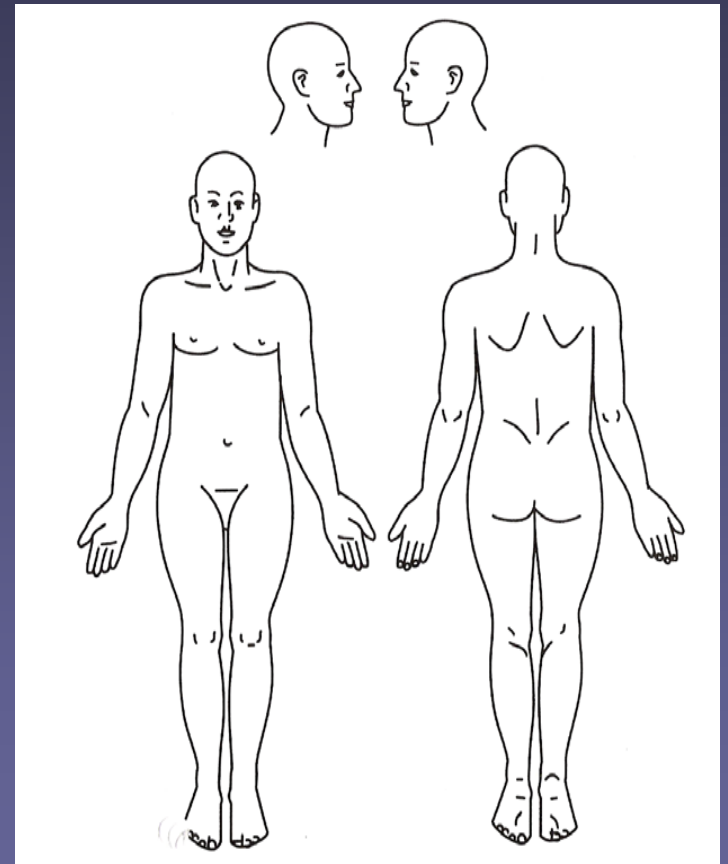
# Components of pain

*sensory-discriminative*    *affective-motivational*

- how intense is pain ?
  - where is pain felt ?
  - processed in lateral thalamus and primary somatosensory cortex
- how unpleasant emotion pain evokes ?
  - processed in medial thalamus, anterior cingulate, insular, parietal and prefrontal cortex

# Pain perception

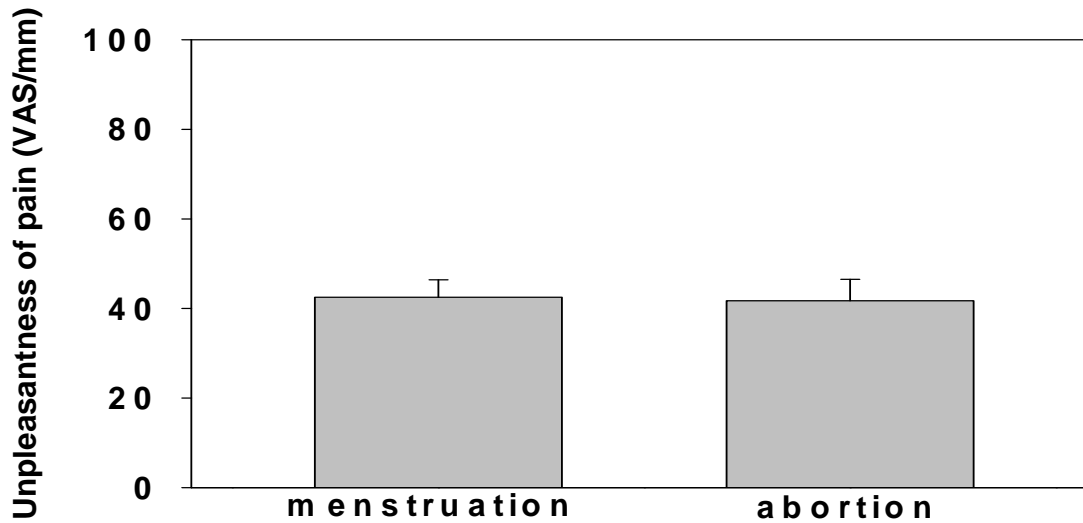
- menstrual pain
  - intensity VAS
  - unpleasantness VAS
  - pain drawing
  
- pain during abortion
  - intensity VAS
  - unpleasantness VAS
  - pain drawing



# Pain perception

- at the hospital :
  - evaluation of pain intensity by nurses (VAS)
- "pain diary"
  - how long pain was felt at home
  - need for painkillers
- at the check-up :
  - collection of pain diary
  - could you have been at home ?

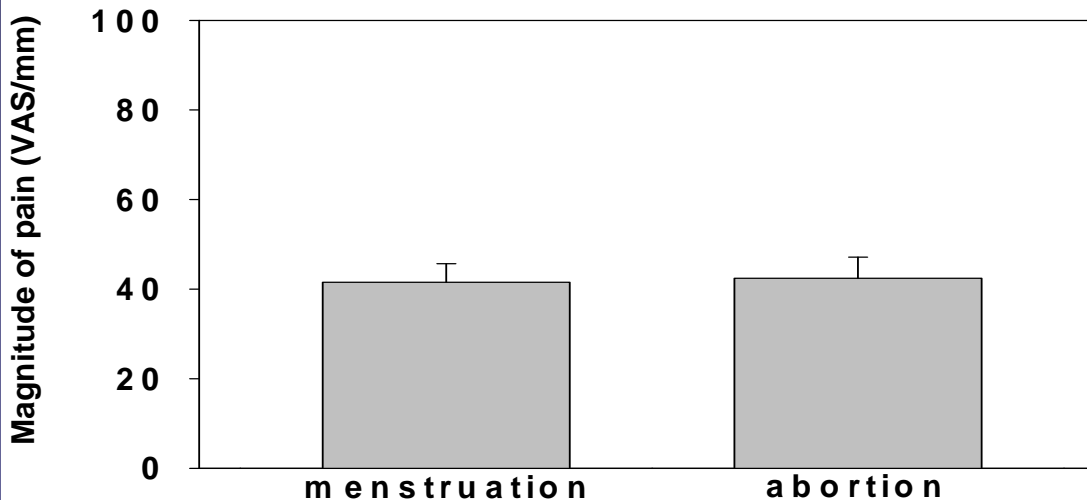
### Affective-motivational component of pain during menstruation and abortion



pain during  
abortion

similar to

### Sensory-discriminative component of pain during menstruation and abortion



menstrual  
pain (paired t-test)



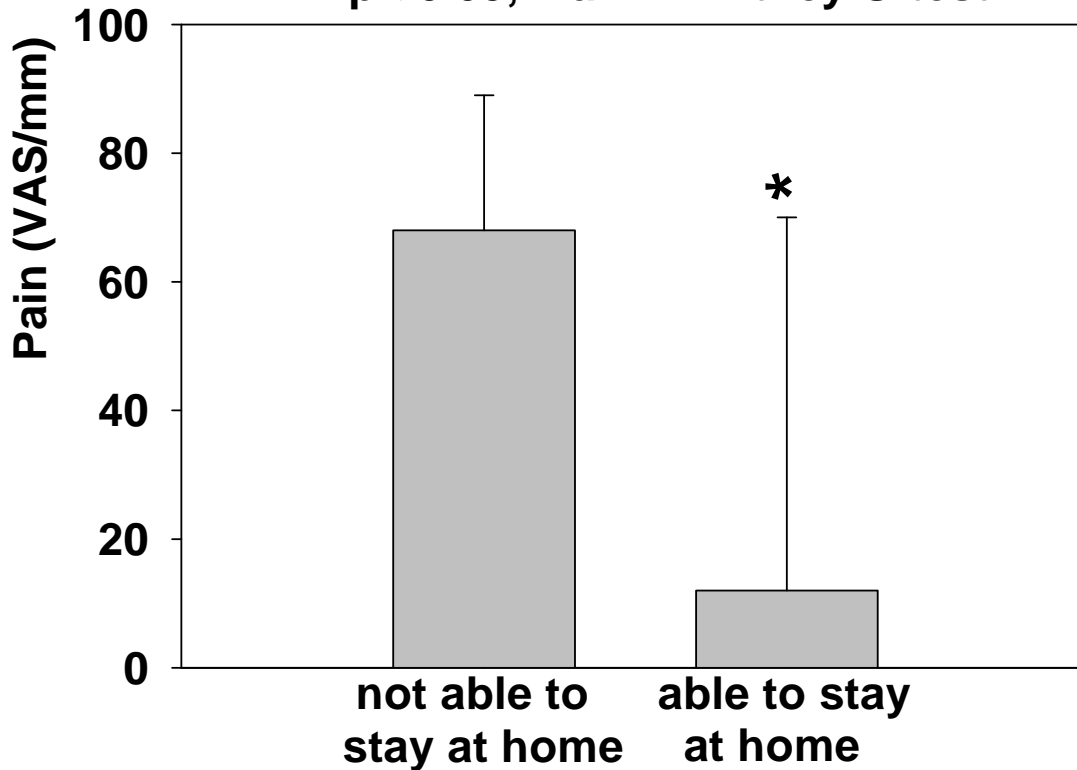
# Pain perception

- parous women reported less pain
- staff's evaluation of severity of pain correlated well with subject's VAS
- pain intensity did not correlate better with parity (-0.59) than with the length of pregnancy ( $r = 0.35$ ) or with the woman's age (-0.35)
- the unpleasantness of pain correlated better with parity ( $r = -0.63$ ) than with duration of pregnancy (0.36) or with the woman's age (-0.33)

# Willingness to stay at home

Perceived pain and self-estimated ability to stay at home during abortion

\*  $p < 0.05$ , Mann-Whitney U-test



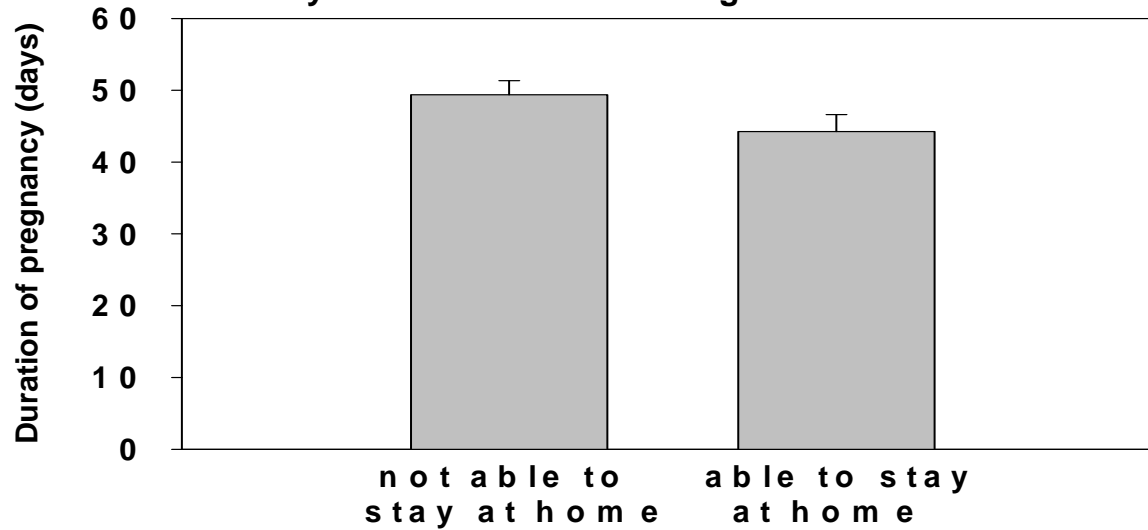
·55 %

·age n.s.

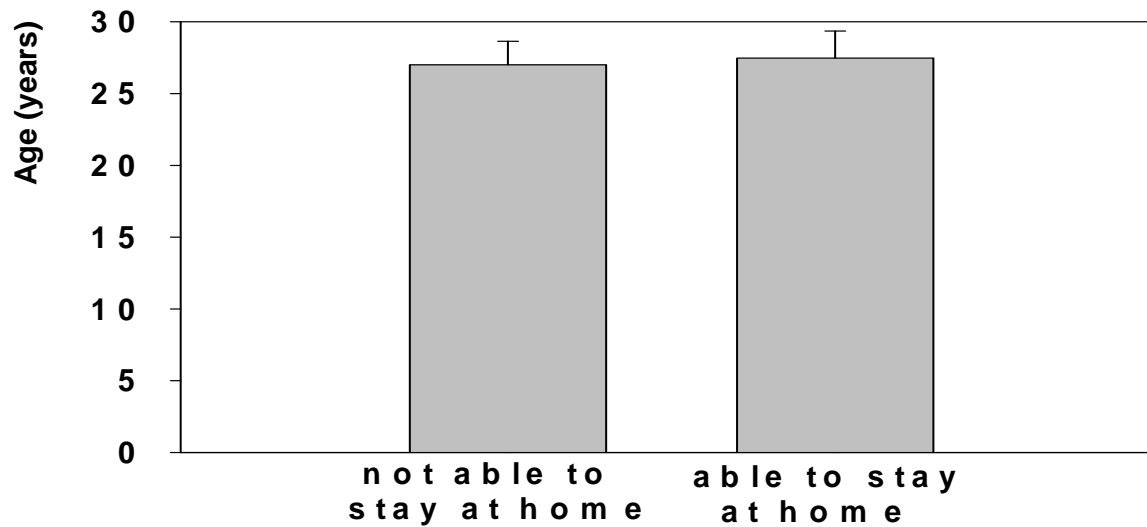
·parity n.s.

·length of pregnancy n.s.

### Duration of pregnancy and self-estimated ability to stay at home during abortion



### Age of the patient and self-estimated ability to stay at home during abortion



# Conclusions

- counseling

“pain during abortion is like your menstrual pain”

- selection of women for home abortion

age, parity, length of pregnancy not that important

- sufficient pain relief

- Marja Tikka, RN, Family Planning Clinic, HUICS
- Timo Kauppila, ass. prof., University of Helsinki, Health Centre of City of Vantaa
- Seppo Kivinen, professor, HUICS
- staffs of HUICS and Health Centre of City of Vantaa
- active women

... talking about medical abortion



Thank you !