

A new study suggests men cause women more pain in childbirth

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During the four years I spent working in labor and delivery, I witnessed just about every type of birth you could imagine — with just about every type of couple and noncouple situation you could imagine.

And although every birth is different, I have to tell you that there is one thing that often doesn't get mentioned in all those articles on birth plans and preparing for your baby — and that's how men handle being in the delivery room.

While the woman giving birth is always my primary focus, of course, the man who got her there is never far from my mind and, in many instances, has been the one to take front and center. I've had men do everything from ask me for a comb to fix his hair while his wife was pushing to men full-on passing out to even the highly uncomfortable situation of being hit on while my hand has been in a cervix.

In the most extreme circumstances, I have longed to kick men out of the delivery room. I understand that many of them honestly just don't get it, but that's really the worst part — they just don't get it. They don't realize how rude it is to openly eat a sub in front of their wife, who is starving and trying to concentrate. They don't realize how hard it is to focus through a contraction while blabbing updates on the phone. And they certainly can't understand what it's like to journey through the most painful, emotional and, for some women, spiritual time of their lives — all while on full display in an unfamiliar environment.

For some women, having their men in the delivery room has honestly bordered on abuse, and to help a woman get through her labor, I have done everything from come up with errands for him to run to threatening to call security. And while any OB nurse can tell you that sometimes men can simply be a pain in the delivery room, a [new study shows that men can *literally* be a pain](#): For women who aren't emotionally connected to their partners, simply having the men in the delivery room with them actually physically increased their pain levels.

Now, don't get me wrong. I fully believe there's no such thing as "women's business" or that men can't handle seeing the messy business of birth or that a woman should fear losing her sexy factor just because her partner sees another human being extracted from her body. Give me a break. When men would whimper "I can't do it!" when it came time to cut the cord, I always got the urge to smack them upside the head. Were they watching what just went down for the last nine months? Did they catch what their wife/girlfriend/accidental one-night stand

just went through? And you're telling me you can't exert a little pressure on a pair of scissors? If I believed that such a phrase made any sense, it would be one instance in my life when I'd be tempted to say, "Man up, *now!*"

But when it comes time to help a woman with her journey through labor and into motherhood, I stand firm that when push comes to shove, she needs to do what she needs to do. And if that means keeping her man the hell out of the way, then so be it.