

Overall incidence of obstetric anal sphincter injury 4.9 percent

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"Vacuum-assisted vaginal [delivery](#) conferred the highest odds of [obstetric](#) anal sphincter injury followed by prolonged duration of the second stage of labor, particularly among certain subpopulations," the authors write.

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(HealthDay)—The incidence of obstetric anal sphincter injury is 4.9 percent, and risk factors include vacuum-assisted vaginal delivery and prolonged duration of second stage of labor, according to a study published online Jan. 9 in *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

Olga Ramm, M.D., from the Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center in California, and colleagues conducted a [retrospective cohort study](#) including 22,741 singleton, term, cephalic, vaginal deliveries to examine the incidence of obstetric anal sphincter injuries, defined as third- or fourth-degree perineal lacerations.

The researchers found that the overall incidence rate of obstetric anal sphincter injuries was 4.9 percent (3.6 and 24.0 percent among women who delivered spontaneously versus those who had a vacuum-assisted vaginal delivery, respectively; P vaginal birth after cesarean delivery or an episiotomy).

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