

ROLE OF RELAXIN IN PRETERM BIRTH

Narkulova Soxiba Uktamovna ¹

¹ Samarkand State Medical University, Assistant at the
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology N3.

Abduraxmonova Gulruy ¹

¹ Samarkand State Medical University, First-year resident of the Department of
Obstetrics and Gynecology N3.

+998 93 336 11 40 / sohiba.obs.gyn@mail.ru
Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

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Premature labor remains one of the leading causes of perinatal morbidity and mortality and is still one of the most challenging medical problems. To prevent and intervene in a timely manner, it is necessary to understand the biological processes that may cause it. One such factor is the hormone relaxin, which plays a key role in preparing the body for labor, but its imbalance can contribute to premature labor. This paper examines the role of relaxin in the process of premature labor, as well as the possible mechanisms through which it may influence the onset of labor.

INTRODUCTION. Premature labor remains one of the leading causes of perinatal morbidity and mortality and is still one of the most challenging medical problems. To prevent and intervene in a timely manner, it is necessary to understand the biological processes that may cause it. One such factor is the hormone relaxin, which plays a key role in preparing the body for labor, but its imbalance can contribute to premature labor. This paper examines the role of relaxin in the process of premature labor, as well as the possible mechanisms through which it may influence the onset of labor.

1. Biological Role of Relaxin in the Pregnant Woman's Body

Relaxin is a peptide hormone synthesized by the ovaries and placenta during pregnancy. It has several important functions, including relaxing the smooth muscle of the uterus, expanding blood vessels, and preparing the cervix and pelvic ligaments for labor. One of its main tasks is to reduce the tone of the uterus, which helps prevent premature contractions.

At the beginning of pregnancy, relaxin levels rise, which is essential for the normal growth and development of the fetus. As pregnancy progresses, relaxin levels continue to rise, peaking during the pre-labor period. Relaxin also affects the connective tissue structure of the cervix, preparing it for dilation.

2. Mechanism of Relaxin's Action on the Uterus and Cervix

Relaxin acts on receptors located on the cells of the cervix and pelvic ligaments, leading to their reduction in stiffness. This results in relaxation and increased elasticity, which is necessary for the proper progression of labor. At the cellular level, relaxin affects fibroblasts, which synthesize collagen, leading to reduced collagen production and altering the structure of connective tissues. However, disturbances in this system, such as excessive secretion of relaxin or incomplete regulation of its levels, may cause abnormal changes in the uterus and cervix, which can increase the likelihood of premature labor. For example, too strong a relaxing effect of relaxin can trigger premature preparation of the cervix for dilation, leading to premature labor.

3. The Role of Relaxin in Premature Labor

Premature labor can be caused by various factors, with hormonal changes playing a significant role. Elevated levels of relaxin have been associated with increased permeability of the cervix to inflammatory agents, which can trigger inflammation and subsequent premature activity. Moreover, relaxin levels that exceed normal can accelerate the maturation of the cervix, leading to its premature dilation. Thus, the hormone can disrupt the normal regulation of labor activity, increasing the risk of premature labor.

4. Research and Clinical Observations

Numerous studies have confirmed that elevated levels of relaxin in the blood of women with premature labor may serve as a predictor of labor activity. Some researchers suggest that measuring relaxin levels could be a useful marker for the risk of premature labor. However, no universal model yet exists that allows for the accurate prediction of the onset of labor based solely on this hormone's level. Recent studies show that certain mutations in genes encoding relaxin or its receptors may predispose women to higher levels of the hormone, increasing the risk of premature labor. Animal model studies also demonstrate

that targeting relaxin receptors can regulate uterine contractions, providing hope for the development of new methods of preventing premature labor.

5. Prediction and Prevention of Premature Labor Considering the Role of Relaxin

Predicting premature labor remains one of the most complex tasks in modern obstetrics. However, there is a promising direction involving the use of relaxin levels as a marker for assessing the risk of premature labor. For instance, analyzing relaxin levels in combination with other biochemical and ultrasound indicators may improve diagnostic accuracy.

It is also important to note that research is underway to develop drugs that regulate relaxin levels, which could form the basis for new methods of preventing premature labor.

Conclusion: Relaxin plays a crucial role in preparing the body for labor, but its excessive or insufficient amount can significantly impact the onset of labor. Understanding the mechanism of relaxin's action and its connection to premature labor opens up possibilities for developing new diagnostic and prevention methods for this condition. Future research in this area may significantly improve them prediction and treatment of premature labor, helping to reduce risks for both mothers and newborns.

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