

Discussion Questions for Intro to Critical Appraisal Small Group Discussion –

Student Copy

1. One of the limitations of the study was that masking/blinding was not feasible (p. 522 and p. 514).
2. What problems are caused when studies are not blinded?
3. Would it have been possible to blind the patients/clinicians?
4. Who should be blinded in trials?
5. Were any groups blinded in this study? (p. 516)

1. Women in the study were randomly assigned to either labor induction or expectant management.  The randomization sequence was prepared by an independent data coordinating center. (Methods Section p. 515)
2. How did the researchers ensure that the participants were randomized to the correct group according to the randomization sequence “list” prepared by the independent data coordinating center?
3. What potential effect could it have on the results of the study if allocation was not concealed?

1. Let’s see if the randomization worked by comparing the prognostic factors of the two groups at the start of the trial. Turn to Table 1. Maternal Characteristics at Baseline on page 518.
2. Are both groups similar at baseline?

1. Now let’s take a look at who was included and excluded from the study. Turn to Figure 1 on page 517 of the article.
2. What do you notice about who was excluded? What stands out to you?
3. What effect could the low participation rate have on the results of this study?
4. Let’s go back to Table 1. Do the patients in this trial have characteristics that might not be representative of the general population?

1. The researchers used intention-to-treat analysis. (p.516)
2. What does that mean?
3. Why is it important to use intention-to-treat analysis?

1. According to the authors, “their data suggest that 1 cesarean delivery may be avoided for every 28 deliveries among low-risk nulliparous women who plan to undergo elective induction of labor at 39 weeks.” (p. 522). This is known as the number needed to treat (NNT).
2. How would you explain this information to a patient?

1. What do you think of the power of the study in this population with respect to the outcome the authors were trying to measure? (p.516 & p.522)