

UNIT 2: OBSTETRICS
SECTION B: ABNORMAL OBSTETRICS

Educational Topic 21: Fetal Demise

Rationale: Antepartum stillbirth is a devastating pregnancy complication that may cause additional risks to the patient. Early medical management and patient support is warranted. Evaluation of fetal demise is needed to assess the risk to future pregnancies.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

A student should be able to:

- Describe the symptoms and common causes of fetal demise in each trimester including genetic and nutritional factors
- Describe the diagnostic methods to confirm the diagnosis and etiology of fetal demise
- Describe the medical and psychosocial management of a patient diagnosed with a fetal demise
- Outline the steps to disclose a diagnosis of fetal demise to a patient
- Identify factors unique to developing countries that may lead to fetal demise

TEACHING CASE

CASE: A 30 year-old G1P0 woman presents for a routine prenatal visit at 36 weeks gestation. Her prenatal course has been uncomplicated. She had a normal ultrasound at 20 weeks gestation with a normal fetal anatomic survey. She reports no problems and good fetal movement. Unfortunately, no fetal heart tones were heard by Doppler and an ultrasound evaluation confirmed no fetal cardiac activity. She is very upset and you spend time counseling her.

COMPETENCY-BASED DISCUSSION & KEY TEACHING POINTS:

Competencies addressed:

- Patient care
- Medical knowledge
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Professionalism
- System-Based Practice

1. What is the definition of fetal demise?
2. What are the symptoms and physical findings and diagnostic methods used to confirm the diagnosis of fetal demise?
3. What risk factors are associated with fetal demise?
4. What are some causes and conditions associated with fetal demise?
5. What work-up should be considered for a patient with a fetal demise?
6. Describe the medical and psychosocial management of a patient diagnosed with a fetal demise.
7. How should a patient with a history of an unexplained fetal demise be followed in a future pregnancy?

REFERENCES

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APGO Medical Student Educational Objectives, Topic 16: Spontaneous Abortion

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