IUGR Up With More Embryos Transferred During IVF

BY SHARON WORCESTER
Southeast Bureau

San Francisco — The transfer of more than one embryo during in vitro fertilization has a substantial adverse residual effect on intrauterine growth—even when only one fetal heart is detected on early ultrasound, findings from a large historical cohort study suggest.

A review of data from 23,999 singleton live births resulting from assisted reproductive technology cycles performed from 2004 to 2006 showed that the risk for intrauterine growth restriction increased significantly with the number of embryos transferred; compared with one embryo transferred, the risks were increased by 16%, 24%, 34% and 56% when two, three, four, or five embryos were transferred, respectively. Barbara Luke, Sc.D., reported at the annual meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine.

No differences were seen in preterm birth weights based on the number of embryos transferred. Also, factors such as maternal age, birth weight (mean of 3,243 g), length of gestation (mean of 265 days), and birth weight for gestation (z score, mean of 0.30 standard deviation units) did not differ significantly across the embryo transfer groups, noted Dr. Luke of Michigan State University, East Lansing.

Preterm birth was defined as birth prior to 37 weeks’ gestation, and intrauterine growth restriction was defined as a z score of less than −1. The z score is a measure of intrauterine growth adequacy, with a mean of 0 (indicating the 50th percentile of intrauterine growth), she explained.

The findings support the theory that there is a critical period during which abnormal placentation related to the transfer of multiple embryos may adversely affect pregnancy—even for singletons, Dr. Luke concluded.

Few Women Require Hysterectomy Post GEA

BY DOUG BRUNK
San Diego Bureau

Las Vegas — The hysterectomy rate was less than 10% among 711 women who underwent global endometrial ablation (GEA).

Dr. Carey and associates identified 711 women who underwent GEA for menorrhagia between January 1998 and December 2005. They compared data between women who underwent hysterectomy and those who did not during the follow-up period, which lasted a mean of 2.9 years.

Adenomyosis was present in 29% of women who had a hysterectomy for pain and in 28% who had a hysterectomy for bleeding. “Adenomyosis has been thought to be a major factor related to postablation pain syndrome,” Dr. Carey commented. “However, we found that women had a lower rate of adenomyosis than we expected, and the rates were similar in both groups.”

Dr. Carey had no disclosures to make.

Birth Control May Harm Natural Defenses Against Herpesvirus

BY HEIDI SPLETE
Senior Writer

Washington — Using hormonal contraceptives might weaken a woman’s natural immunity to the herpesvirus, according to findings from a pilot study of healthy women aged 18-35 years.

Findings from previous epidemiologic studies suggest that women who use hormonal contraception are at increased risk for sexually transmitted infections and herpes simplex virus (HSV) shedding. Yet clinical studies have shown that “cervicovaginal lavage fluid protects against HSV, HIV, and bacteria,” lead author Dr. Gail F. Shust said at the jointly held annual Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy and the annual meeting of the Infectious Diseases Society of America.

Dr. Shust and colleagues from Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York, measured anti-HSV activity and levels of immunity associated with hormonal contraception use by collecting samples of cervicovaginal lavage (CVL) fluid from 16 women once a week for 3-8 weeks. Nine women had normal ovulatory cycles and served as controls, and seven women used hormonal contraception.

When average values from the repeat CVL samples from each woman were compared, in the follicular phase, women using hormonal contraception showed significantly less anti-HSV activity compared with the controls. In the luteal phase, the difference did not reach statistical significance.

When individual fluid samples were compared (for a total of 94 samples), the anti-HSV activity in women using hormonal contraception was significantly lower, compared with the controls, in both the follicular and luteal phases.

Correlations between anti-HSV activity and specific mucosal mediators that can inhibit herpes infection were measured through a Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient analysis. Based on this measure, anti-HSV activity was positively correlated with levels of human neutrophil peptides (HNP)s 1, 2, and 3 (Spearman’s r = 0.45), lactoferrin (r = 0.52), lysozyme (r = 0.58), and liga (r = 0.44). In addition, anti-HSV activity was negatively correlated with interferon-alpha (2.5; r = -0.36). Each of these correlations was statistically significant.

The study was limited by its small size and intrasubject and intersubject variability in anti-HSV activity.

These findings may provide a biologic explanation for the epidemiologic findings of increased risk for acquisition of sexually transmitted infections, and for HSV shedding, in the setting of hormonal contraception, the researchers said. Dr. Shust reported no financial conflicts of interest.