CRDB Catheter Falls Short in Some Cases

BY PATRICE WENDLING

CHICAGO — The cervical-ripening double-balloon catheter has a more favorable effect on cervical ripening than a Foley catheter in nulliparous, but not multiparous, women, according to a prospective randomized trial in 200 women.

**Major Finding:** The mean interval from catheter withdrawal to delivery time was 9 hours for the CRDB catheter vs. 14 hours for the Foley catheter in multiparous women in the first study, a nonsignificant difference. Time from insertion to delivery was significantly less at a mean of 19 hours with the Foley vs. a mean of 23 hours with the CRDB in the second study.

**Data Source:** Two prospective, randomized studies comparing the CRDB catheter with the Foley catheter, the first in 200 women and the second in 188 women.

**Disclosures:** None was reported.

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Neonatal MRSA Often Community Acquired

BY KATE JOHNSON

MONTREAL — Community-acquired strains are the most common source of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* colonization and infection in babies in the neonatal intensive care unit, even though they have never left the hospital, researchers have found.

Findings in a 5-year retrospective study of 50 MRSA-colonized neonates in the NICU were presented at the annual meeting of the Infectious Diseases Society for Obstetrics and Gynecology.

“There are higher rates of community-acquired MRSA infection in our neonates than in our general adult and pediatric patient population,” lead investigator Dr. Gwendolyn T. Hazenby of the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston said in an interview. “This is a call for people to help us really detail the sources of such early colonization, how we can prevent it, and how we can prevent subsequent infection.”

Theories on how neonates are exposed to MRSA in the NICU include maternal transmission, transmission from other family members or hospital workers, contaminated equipment, and a recently reported transmission through breast milk, she said.

“We have some concern about family members and maternal transmission to neonates, and so we would like to consider neonatal colonization by possibly culturing the individuals the babies are exposed to, including health care workers.”

In the current study, there was a mean of 21 days between birth and colonization of the 50 infants. However, 30% tested positive within 7 days of birth, she said.

“The 30% of infants who acquired early MRSA colonization, within the first week, were 2.5 times more likely to go on to develop infection,” she explained. No other risk factors for infection—including ethnicity, sex, method of delivery, gestational age, or length of stay—could be identified, although there was a nonsignificant trend toward a higher risk with lower birth weight.

In total, 16 of the 50 colonized infants (32%) eventually developed MRSA infections, which included eight bloodstream infections, six skin and soft tissue infections, and two ventilator-associated pneumonia cases.

One of the bloodstream infections was fatal and was identified as a community-acquired MRSA strain (USA 300).

Pulse field gel electrophoresis identified USA 300 in 36% of 14 colonizing strains and 56% of 9 infection strains, she said. “This is considerably higher than what is seen in the rest of our hospital’s pediatric and adult patient population, where we see a 4%-6% colonization rate and a 19% infection rate, with one-quarter of those infections being community-acquired.”

Dr. Hazenby said decolonization is not currently attempted in neonates. “No one has looked at the effect of topical decolonization, and we do try to be as minimal as possible with neonates in the NICU,” she said.

“Recurrence may be possible in colonized infants if isolation and contact precautions to prevent spreading the infection to other babies, she said.

**Disclosures:** None was reported.

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No Raised Risk With Multiple Steroid Courses

BY PATRICE WENDLING

CHICAGO — The risk of death or neurologic impairment was similar at 2 years after exposure to either single or multiple courses of antenatal corticosteroids, according to a follow-up analysis of data from the multicenter MACS trial.

“Continued follow-up of these children is important and necessary to determine if there are subtle effects of steroid exposure that only become evident in later years,” Dr. Elizabeth Astaltos said at the annual meeting of the Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine.

The findings are encouraging as the same group previously reported that multiple courses of antenatal corticosteroids (ACS) given at 14-day intervals do not improve preterm birth outcomes and are associated with a significant decrease in weight, length, and head circumference at birth (Lancet 2008;372:2143-51). “Therefore, this treatment schedule is not recommended,” the authors wrote.

MACS, the Multiple Courses of Antenatal Corticosteroids for Preterm Birth Study, included women who were at high risk of preterm birth at 25-32 weeks’ gestation. All of the women received an initial course of ACS. There were 1,858 women who were undelivered and remained at high risk at 14-21 days after the initial course of ACS. These women were randomized to either ACS or placebo given every 14 days until week 33 or delivery, whichever came first.

The secondary composite outcome of death or neurologic impairment was evaluated at 18-24 months. Neurologic impairment was defined as cerebral palsy or abnormal cognitive development. The Infant Development and Health Outcomes of Steroids for Preterm Birth (MACS) study was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The authors disclosed no conflicts of interest.

**Major Finding:** Death or neurologic impairment at 18-24 months was just under 14% among the offspring of women at high risk for preterm birth, irrespective of whether they were given a single course or multiple courses of antenatal corticosteroids.

**Data Source:** The MACS trial of 1,858 women at high risk for preterm birth.

**Disclosures:** MACS was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The authors disclosed no conflicts of interest.

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As part of the MACS study, women at high risk for preterm birth were randomized to receive a single course or multiple courses of antenatal corticosteroids. Women were followed until 18-24 months of age to determine the rate of death or neurologic impairment. The findings are encouraging as the same group previously reported that multiple courses of antenatal corticosteroids given at 14-day intervals do not improve preterm birth outcomes and are associated with a significant decrease in weight, length, and head circumference at birth (Lancet 2008;372:2143-51). “Therefore, this treatment schedule is not recommended,” the authors wrote.

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