An Anal Sphincter Lacerations Underreported in Hospitals

By Jane Salodof MacNeil
Southwest Bureau

Scottsdale, Ariz. — Anal sphincter tears are about 12 times more common than previously thought, a recently published study suggests.

Researchers found a significant rise in the number of women who delivered vaginally without anal sphincter lacerations at the time of birth, suggesting that anal sphincter tears were underreported.

The study, which was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, analyzed data from the National Hospital Discharge Survey, a large database of hospital discharge records for the years 2000 to 2001.

The researchers found that the number of women who delivered vaginally without anal sphincter lacerations increased from 0.83 per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 0.99 per 1,000 live births in 2001, a statistically significant increase.

“The increase in the number of women who delivered vaginally without anal sphincter lacerations is consistent with evidence from other studies suggesting that anal sphincter tears are underreported,” said Dr. Brubaker, director of female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Ill. “This is likely due to undercoding of anal sphincter tears in medical records.”

The study also found that the error rate for coding anal sphincter tears was 5.6%, with the highest error rates occurring in the Midwest and the South.

The researchers concluded that efforts to improve coding of anal sphincter tears are needed to accurately track the incidence of this condition.

Imported Congenital Rubella Syndrome Case Seen in N.H.

By Mary Ellen Schneider
Senior Writer

There was a slight up tick in the number of abortions reported in 2002, according to figures published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The number of abortions increased from 637 to 854,122 between 2001 and 2002. However, the abortion rate—16 per 1,000 women—has remained constant since 2000.

The figures are based on data reported from 47 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City. The analysis does not include information from Alaska, California, and New Hampshire.

Congenital rubella syndrome was suspected and confirmed by positive rubella IgM and positive urine and nasopharyngeal cultures. The genetic sequence was found to be that of a wild-type rubella virus similar to one found in Uganda in 2001, the CDC said.

An institution with a coding problem may seem to have ‘better’ quality than one with an identical rate and better coding. Dr. BRUBAKER

The discrepancies could have significant implications for quality assurance and research initiatives. Dr. Brubaker told this newspaper that the increase could be due to improvements in coding and reporting.

The trial is comparing women with anal sphincter lacerations at the time of birth with women who had cesarean delivery without labor and women who delivered vaginally without anal sphincter laceration in the trial.

The women with codes for anal sphincter lacerations that did not occur came from the control groups.

C D C Reports a Small Increase in Number of Abortions in 2002

By Miriam E. Tucker
Senior Writer

The CDC also reported a jump in the number of abortions performed in 2002, but the rate of abortion was not significantly increased.

The rate of abortion in the United States has declined from 16.9 abortions per 1,000 women in 2000 to 15.4 abortions per 1,000 women in 2002. A total of 308 cases of neonatal GBS disease were reported in 2004, 47% early-onset and 53% late-onset. The incidence of late-onset disease fell significantly from 2000 to 2004.

The rate of abortion is lower in the United States than in many other countries, including Canada and Australia, where the rate is around 20 abortions per 1,000 women. However, the rate of abortion in the United States is still significantly higher than in many other countries, including Canada and Australia.

The researchers reported that the number of abortions performed in 2002 was similar to the number of abortions performed in 2001, but that the rate of abortion was not significantly increased.

Most of the abortions (87%) reported to the CDC were performed at less than 13 weeks’ gestation. Only 4% of abortions occurred between 16 and 20 weeks, and 1% of abortions occurred after 20 weeks.

The researchers found that the number of abortions performed in the United States fell from 2001 to 2002. However, the analysis showed that the number of abortions had declined from 130.3 million in 2000 to 129.2 million in 2002.

The discrepancy may be due to differences in methodology. The Guttmacher Institute analysis used CDC data and figures collected for state health departments to project changes from a 2000 survey of all known abortion providers.

Regardless of the precise figures, there is still a lot of work to be done, said Rachel Jones, a senior research associate with the Guttmacher Institute. Women need increased access to contraception and better information about pregnancy prevention, she said.

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