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Pediatr Ther 2018, Volume:8
DOI: 10.4172/2161-0665-C10-079

Prenatal diagnosis of major congenital heart disease is associated with increased mortality

Rebekka Lytzen
Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark

Introduction: We conducted a nationwide, retrospective study to assess the consequence of prenatal diagnosis of a major CHD on mortality and morbidity.

Methods: In a nationwide study running from 1996 to 2013, we included 2695 terminated pregnancies (TOP) and live-born children diagnosed with a major CHD. From 2004 prenatal screening was universally offered to pregnant women in Denmark.

Results: 17.5% of fetuses with major CHD were terminated, 0.6% in 1996 increasing to 39.1% in 2013 ($p<0.0001$). The highest TOP rate was found in UVH where 86.5% were terminated in 2013. All-cause as well as cardiac 30-day and 1-year mortality rates decreased throughout the study ($p<0.0001$). The highest rates were found in patients with UVH where 52.6% of live-born children died within the first year of life. Detection rates increased from 4.5% in 1996 to 71.0% in 2013 ($p<0.0001$). There was increased all-cause and cardiac mortality in live-born children whose CHD had been diagnosed prenatally with a hazard ratio of 2.23 ($p<0.0001$) and 2.04 ($p<0.0001$), respectively. After the introduction of general screening, the hazard ratio for cardiac death was no longer statistically significant (HR 0.91, $p=0.5648$). The children diagnosed prenatally had longer length of stay and higher occurrence of kidney failure ($p=0.0112$) and respiratory insufficiency ($p=0.0061$).

Conclusion: Prenatal diagnosis is associated with worse prognosis. This may be caused by selection bias as severe cases are more easily detected and the value of prenatal diagnosis may be difficult to demonstrate due to improvements in the detection of major CHD after birth.

A case report of Ortner's syndrome

Farah Harmani[1] and **Niniek Purwaningtyas**[2]
[1]Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia
[2]Dr. Moewardi Hospital, Indonesia

Introduction: Ortner's syndrome (cardiovocal syndrome), is a very rare condition that has not many cases reported, characterized by hoarseness. It is caused by vocal fold paralysis, due to stretching, pulling or compression on the left recurrent laryngeal nerve. This is a result of cardiovascular structures enlargement. The left recurrent laryngeal nerve is more frequently involved than the right nerve due to its natural anatomy, with a longer course around the aortic arch. Atrial septal defect (ASD) causing Ortner's syndrome is indeed a very rare condition.

Case Report: A 31 year old female patient presented with an untreated congenital ostium primum ASD, and hoarseness. Her chief complaints were 2 weeks of shortness of breath and 5 years of hoarseness. On cardiovascular examination, we could hear wide-fixed splitting with heave; S2 was sharper and louder than S1, pansystolic murmur on apex radiating to axilla, and crescendo-decrescendo systolic murmur on right sternal border. Echocardiography showed an ostium primum ASD, bidirectional shunt, moderate pulmonary hypertension, severe mitral regurgitation, and severe tricuspid regurgitation. Cardiac catheterization and oxygen test results in low flow high resistance, and non-reactive oxygen test. Indirect laryngoscopy revealed left vocal fold paralysis.

Conclusion: Hoarseness secondary to laryngeal nerve compression in cardiovascular disease may correlate with a poorer prognosis. Indirect laryngoscopy should be routinely performed in all cases of heart disease. Awareness of vocal changes in the setting of cardiovascular disease will improve prognosis.

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