

International Conference and Exhibition on **Pediatric Cardiology** August 25-27, 2015 Valencia, Spain

Fetal echocardiography in developing countries, what numbers reflect?

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Cairo University Children Hospital is a tertiary care center and a referral center for children from all over Egypt. It is a very high volume center having around 2000 new patients attending its general and specialized clinics every day. To determine the incidence and relative frequency of congenital heart disease among patients referred to Echocardiography Unit at Cairo University Children Hospital, we conducted this observational study over one year (January –December 2013). 6184 children attended the unit during this period, newly presented children were 3195. Congenital heart diseases were detected in 41.9%, majority of which were acyanotic heart diseases (69.7%), while 30.3% were among cyanotic group. VSD (ventricular septal defect) was the most frequently detected acyanotic CHD (14.87%), while ASD (atrial septal defect) was the second frequent. On the other hand, D-TGA (D- transposition of the great arteries) was the most frequent among cyanotic CHD followed by TOF (Tetralogy of Fallot). Acquired heart diseases were detected in only 10.8% child. PFO (Patent Foramen Ovale) was found in 11.8%. Patients who had previous surgical intervention constituted only 1.4% of total new patients, while post catheterization intervention was only 0.3%. Normal heart study was found in 33.9%, noticeably comparable to the 41.9% with CHD, and if we added cases with PFO which is considered a normal finding in infancy, the frequency of normal studies would be raised to 45.7% which is even higher than that of congenital heart disease group. This finding reflects the over referral of cases which might not be indicated for echocardiography in first place which again reflect the need for establishing national criteria for referral to avoid over utilization of the service.

Biography

Soha Emam is a Professor of Pediatrics & Pediatric Cardiology at Kasr-Alaini School of Medicine, Cairo University, Egypt. She has completed her MD at Cairo University School of Medicine and has been specialized in Pediatric Cardiology. She completed her Post-doctoral training in Pediatric Cardiology at Italy. She is the Medical Coordinator of the Pediatric Cardiology Department, Cairo University and is the Head of Scientific & Conferences activity committee and a Coordinator of Research Activities of the Department. She has many publications in pediatric cardiology field and is an editor in reputed journals and serving as reviewer for many others. Her field of interest is fetal echocardiography and new echo modalities.

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