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Peripartum cardiomyopathy: The urban experience

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Objective: Peripartum cardiomyopathy is a rare clinical entity of unknown etiology, unique to the pregnant woman that is associated with high maternal morbidity and mortality. The diagnosis is fraught with controversies regarding its definition, pathophysiology, diagnosis and management. The objective of this study was to identify and analyze underlying clinical characteristics contributing to the genesis of the disorder in an urban hospital setting.

Design: This was a retrospective study in which data was compiled from the medical records of 13 women in our institution from 2008-2013, who were diagnosed with peripartum cardiomyopathy. Descriptive analysis was performed using means and proportions for continuous and categorical variables respectively. Statistical analyses were performed using SDSS version 20.0.0

Results: Established risk factors were age >30 years, African American race, cesarean delivery, preeclampsia and obesity (BMI > 32 kg/m²); novel associations of anemia and asthma were identified.

Conclusion: Peripartum cardiomyopathy has an exceptional potential for recovery with early identification. Women of African American descent with established risk factors may benefit from a more thorough evaluation of their cardiovascular status during their prenatal care, to potentially avoid the presentation/severity of the disease entity, with particular attention to:

- Baseline cardiovascular function (EKG, ECHO)
- Expeditious reversal of anemia
- Dietary intervention to lower BMI

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