

New Challenges

With the recent increase in the number of deliveries in Hong Kong, the obstetricians and midwives are facing the new challenges. Will there be adequate number of obstetricians and midwives in the care of the pregnant women in Hong Kong and cross-border deliveries? Will the maternal or neonatal outcomes be adversely affected? Midwives are essential in the care of pregnant women. Ms Sylvia Fung¹, the President of Hong Kong Midwives Association, reviewed the statistics of birth and midwifery in Hong Kong, and indicated there is a shortage of midwives. Dr Au Yeung², a senior doctor working in a public hospital in the New Territories, commented that there was a mismatch in the demand and provision of obstetric service in Hong Kong especially in the public hospitals. It is not easy to measure to what extent the quality of the obstetric care be affected if many experienced staff leave the public sector. While the values of clinical care are well-documented, the benefits of providing antenatal education programme in a very busy clinical environment will be questioned. However, in the study on antenatal education programme by Ms LSL Chan and Dr MWL Wong³, it is interesting to note that the primiparae who attended the programme, "Labour Process", had a significantly longer first stage of labour, received more pharmacological interventions for pain relief, but had a higher breastfeeding participation rate than the primiparae who did not.

Dr T Wong et al⁴ did a randomised controlled trial on the use of a rapidly absorbed polyglactin suture in perineal repair after a vaginal delivery. Within 3 months, women sutured with the rapidly absorbed polyglactin had significantly less visible stitches rate when compared to standard polyglactin (8.0% vs 14.9%).

There are two articles related to the gynaecological

problems of adolescence. First, the study by Drs MWN Wong and WWK To⁵ supported the beneficial effects of physical exercise and physical training on bone mineral density. Young women undergoing regular intensive weight-bearing exercises as in the collegiate dancers here studied have higher bone mineral density accrual as compared to non-exercising females of the same age-group. Second, a total of 235 adolescents with menstrual problems were studied by Drs Yang and To⁶. The dysmenorrhoeic group had particularly lower scores in the domain of bodily pain, while the oligo/amenorrhoeic adolescents scored significantly lower in physical functioning, role performance, vitality, and social functioning. Dr KF Tam and Prof HYS Ngan⁷ gave a nice review on the use of human papillomavirus vaccine. In the near future, we will see young girls receiving injection of human papillomavirus vaccine. There will be a subsequent change in the existing cervical screening programme if the vaccine is proven to be effective in preventing cervical cancer. Dr KY Tse et al⁸ reported a case to illustrate that ectopic pregnancy cannot simply be excluded by a negative pregnancy test.

Many thanks to Prof KH Lee⁹ who has written many interesting 'stories' of obstetrics and gynaecology in the 1960s. I enjoyed reading them.

We are looking forward to receiving your contributions which are essential to the success of this Journal.

KY Leung

MBBS, MSc (ECOM&ICOM), FRCOG,
FHKAM (O&G), Dip (Epid & Appl Stat),
ADip HSM
Editor-in-Chief

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