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SIRENOMELIA- A RARE CASE REPORT

KEY WORDS: Mermaid fetus, oligohydramnios, sirenomelia.

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ABSTRACT

Sirenomelia , alternatively known as “mermaid syndrome” is a rare congenital deformity in which legs are fused ,giving the appearance of tail of mermaid(1). This condition is found in 1:10000 live births(2) i.e 0.01% and is usually fatal.

Case report – A 26yr old primigravida with 14weeks gestation presented to the hospital OPD with abnormal finding on ultrasonography which was otherwise done for routine fetal well being. Ultrasonography showed 14 weeks single live fetus with mermaid syndrome which means that both the lower limbs were fused and also there is decreased liquor volume. Fetal pelvicalcyleal system was prominent and absence of urinary bladder was noticed. The gestational age of fetus was confirmed by LMP and by earliest ultrasonography . She had no medical illness . No significant past or family history. There was no h/o consanguinity.No h/o congenital anomaly in family. Decision to terminate the pregnancy was taken after an informed consent taken from both the parents.Tab Mifegest 200 microgramswas given followed after 48hrs Tab misoprostol 200 micrograms was used for induction. After 3doses of misoprostol,a 100gms fetus with ambiguous genitalia was expelled with fused lower limbs followed by placenta ensac. Due to cultural constraints , the autopsy was not allowed by the parents.



FIG 2: 18 weeks mermaid fetus



Fig.1 : USG showing fused limbs of fetus

Discussion

Sirenomelia , also known as sirenomelia sequence, is a severe congenital malformation of the lower body characterised by fusion of the legs and variable combination of visceral abnormalities(2). Cause of sirenomelia is unclear, however, maternal Diabetes mellitus(3,4), genital predisposition, environmental factor and vascular steal phenomenon with single umbilical artery have been proposed as causative factor.

The spectrum of malformation of lower limbs seen in babies with sirenomelia ranges into following-

1. **Symelia apus-** no feet present and the limbs are completely fused into a single limb, one femur and ne tibia is present.
2. **Symelia unipus-** one feet is present, 2 femurs, 2 tibia and 2 fibula.
3. **Symelia dipus-** two feet present giving appearance of fins , hence the term mermaid fetus for this condition. The fusion of limbs extends only as for as ankles (5)

Commonly associated congenital abnormalities are renal agenesis, absent or malformed external and internal genitalia, a single umbilical artery, a imperforate anus and blind ending large intestine(3) .More than half of the cases of sirenomelia result in stillbirth and those born alive usually die within a day or two of birth because of complications associated with abnormal kidneys and bladder development & functions(6) The diagnosis is currently performed by a prenatal ultrasonography. The clues are oligohydramnios , renal agencies, a fibula positioned between the tibia.

Conclusion-

Sirenomelia is a very rare, crucial, interesting abnormality in fetus.

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