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OBJECTIVES

To assess whether the number of referral indications (single vs multiple) is associated with a higher prevalence of abnormal findings in consultative fetal echocardiography.

METHODS

- Sample of 600 consultative fetal echocardiograms from a tertiary fetal cardiology clinic.
- The indication field was parsed for numeric codes; text-only entries were treated as one indication.
- Cases with no recorded indication (n = 8) were excluded.
- The remaining examinations were classified as 1 indication, 2 indications, or >=3 indications.
- Primary outcome: any abnormal finding in the final report (structural or functional cardiac abnormality and/or major extracardiac anomaly).
- Proportions with 95% confidence intervals were calculated; crude OR compared >=2 indications with one indication.

RESULTS

- 592 examinations were included; median gestational age was 27 weeks.
- Overall abnormality rate: 16.0%.
- Abnormal findings: 14/45 (31.1%) with >=2 indications vs 81/547 (14.8%) with one indication.
- Crude odds ratio for any abnormal finding with >=2 indications: OR 2.6 (95% CI 1.3-5.1).

Indication count	n	Abnormal, n (%)
1 indication	547	81 (14.8%)
2 indications	41	14 (34.1%)
>=3 indications	4	0 (0%)

KEY FINDING

Multiple referral indications were associated with approximately two- to three-fold higher odds of abnormal findings than a single indication.

CONCLUSIONS

- Multiple referral indications were associated with a substantially higher diagnostic yield than a single indication.
- The result supports giving additional weight to the cumulative risk profile when deciding on referral for tertiary fetal echocardiography.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

When more than one referral indication is present, the probability of detecting an abnormal finding on consultative fetal echocardiography is meaningfully higher.