

Conservative versus medical management of retained products of conception: a retrospective review from a London centre



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Objective

The aim of this study is to compare the efficacy of conservative versus medical management of retained products of conception (RPOC).

Design

This was a retrospective review of patients with an ultrasound diagnosis of RPOC over a one-year period and analysis of the success of the conservative or medical management of the RPOC.

Method

A retrospective review was performed of a London Tertiary Hospital's ultrasound database (Astraia) to identify patients diagnosed with RPOC between 1/11/2019 and 1/11/2020. Astraia and electronic patient records were accessed to obtain patient demographics and clinical information. Our unit's policy is to perform a transvaginal ultrasound 3 weeks following conservative and medical management for patients with a positive pregnancy test or persistent bleeding. Medical management consists of 600mcg misoprostol per vagina. Failure of treatment was defined as the persistence of RPOC on TVUS. Statistics were performed using Chi-squared 2 test, logistics regression, Fisher's exact test and Mantel-Haenszel test.

Results

We identified 345 women with RPOC. Conservative management was chosen by 302 (87.5%) and medical management by 43 (12.5%). The age of the patients ranged from 19-47 years (mean=35).

Failure rate for conservative management was 53/302(17.5%) versus 14/43(32.6%) ($p=0.020$). Expectant management of RPOC was more successful than misoprostol when controlled for age ($p=0.018$), parity ($p=0.012$), ethnicity ($p=0.026$), cause of RPOC ($p=0.016$) and length of time from scan confirming viability to diagnosis of RPOC ($p=0.025$). Failure was more common in both treatment options of Doppler signal was detected ($p<0.001$).

Conclusion

Medical management is less effective than conservative management for RPOC in our unit. Counselling of patients should reflect this in order to avoid unnecessary intervention, side effects and reduce long term complications.