

EP.0275: Intensive Antenatal Monitoring and Pregnancy Outcomes after Previous Perinatal Deaths in Nigeria.

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Background

The Nigerian abortion law only permits termination of pregnancy to save maternal life, until 2018 when the scope of legal indications for pregnancy termination was expanded. Hitherto, Clinicians were uncertain of how best to manage women with lethal congenital anomalies. This study presents parental disposition and outcomes of patients with lethal anomalies to pregnancy termination at the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals, Nigeria.

Methods:

Pregnant women at high-risk for congenital anomalies had fetal anomaly scan between Oct 2018 to March 2022 using the ISUOG 20+2 approach. Lethality was assessed by the Fetal Medicine MDT.

Results:

372 anomaly scans were performed, with leading indications being maternal medical conditions (88;23.7%), previous congenital anomalies (70;18.8%), previous unexplained stillbirths (62;16.6%). Thirty-three fetuses (8.9%) with congenital anomalies were identified. Fifteen fetuses had lethal congenital anomalies, including Anencephaly(5), Complex cardiac anomalies(3), Fetal cyclopia(2), Cebocephaly(2), Thanatophoric dysplasia(1), and other multi-systemic anomalies(2). All the parents consented to medication abortion and the diagnoses were confirmed at perinatal autopsy. One patient experienced post-expulsion haemorrhage that warranted transfusion with two units of blood.

Conclusion

Medication abortion is safe and Nigerian women are receptive to termination of pregnancy for lethal congenital anomalies. Easing the restrictive abortion laws in 2018 facilitated institutionalized access to this service, with minimal complications.