

Outcomes in cases of small femur length < 3rd centile

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Objectives

- Determine the relationship between FL <3rd centile and pregnancy outcome in a district general hospital fetal medicine unit

Background

- Short femur length significantly <5th centile requires further assessment as per NHS Fetal Anatomy Screening Programme
- Can be associated with chromosomal abnormalities, skeletal dysplasia and adverse perinatal outcome (small for gestational age / fetal growth restriction / preterm birth)

Design

- Retrospective cohort study of referrals to the fetal medicine unit of a district general hospital in northern England between January 2021 – October 2022

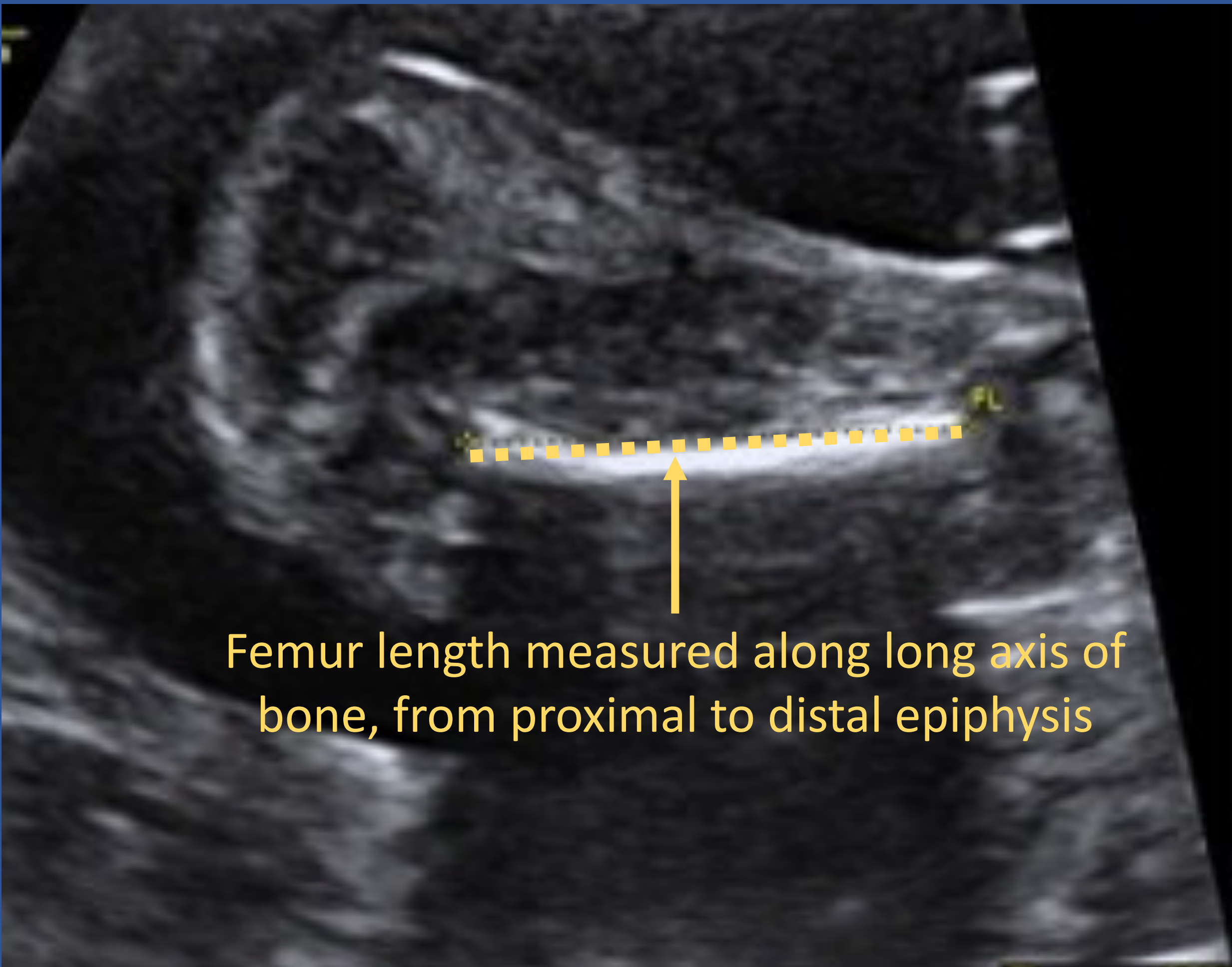
Results

- Accounted for 6.2% of all referrals to the fetal medicine unit (73 cases / 1177 referrals)
- 19% of these (n = 14) for FL <3rd centile as only abnormal feature
Remainder also involved additional growth / Doppler / structural abnormalities
- One proven case of chromosomal abnormality; one case of spina bifida

Conclusion

- Supports results from previous studies
- Chromosomal abnormality appears to be an uncommon outcome following detection of FL <3rd centile in our unit

Femur length < 3rd centile is predominantly associated with fetal growth restriction, small for gestational age and preterm birth



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Table 1: Subsequent location of care of women with finding of FL <3rd centile

Location of care	N	Percentage
Local / regional fetal medicine unit	18	25%
Reviewed by fetal medicine then discharged back to routine care	25	34%
No face to face review – advice provided to parent team	26	36%

Table 2: Pregnancy outcome in cases of FL <3rd centile

Pregnancy outcome	N	Percentage
Live birth	67	92%
Fetal death in utero / late miscarriage	4	5%
Neonatal death	2	3%

Table 3: Incidence of preterm labour, FGR (birthweight < 3rd centile) and SGA (birthweight <10th centile) in cases of FL <3rd centile

Pregnancy characteristics	
Median gestational age at delivery	37+0 (IQR: 35+6 – 38+6)
Percentage of cases delivering preterm (<37+0/40)	47%
Median birthweight centile	5 (IQR 1 - 19)
Percentage of cases with birthweight centile < 3 rd (FGR)	41%
Percentage of cases with birthweight centile < 10 th (SGA)	64%