

HELLP Syndrome: Incidence and Management

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Objective: To estimate the incidence of HELLP syndrome in the Bahrain Government Hospitals.

Design: A retrospective analytical study of all patient deliveries between 1st January, 2001 and 30th April, 2002 was undertaken.

Setting: Salmaniya Medical Complex, Jidhafs and Muharraque Maternity Hospitals. Additionally the Sitra, Riffa and Western Region Maternity Units were surveyed.

Methods: All patients admitted for delivery to Salmaniya Medical Complex together with the other satellite maternity units from the 1st January, 2001 until 30th April, 2002 were reviewed. Since none of the peripheral Government maternity hospitals would deal with such complicated cases, the four cases reported are truly representative of the incidence of HELLP syndrome in the Government Maternity Hospitals in Bahrain.

Results: A total of 16,060 patients were delivered in this period. Of these there were four cases of HELLP syndrome in the hospitals surveyed which indicate that incidence is 0.025% among those surveyed. Two patients were local Bahrainis and two were Indian. One case was admitted at 27 weeks of gestation, the second at 34 weeks, the third at 38 weeks, and the last manifested the symptoms in the peripartum period. In all cases there was an initial delay in the diagnosis and all required intensive care.

Conclusions: There was no maternal mortality and all babies are alive and healthy. The authors are of the opinion that there were some cases of HELLP syndrome that were not accurately diagnosed prior to delivery, and therefore not managed as aggressively as current thinking would recommend. A management protocol must be developed for this serious condition.