

4.1 Eclampsia - Introduction (15 min)

Learning Unit 4 discusses the topic 'Eclampsia'.

Hypertension in pregnancy



Learning objectives

When you have completed this learning unit, you will be able to:

- Define eclampsia
- Understand and discuss the management of preeclampsia. Including:
 - Assessment of maternal condition
 - Assessment of fetal condition
 - Delivery considerations, including timing and mode of delivery
 - Medication considerations, including antihypertensive drugs, analgesics and MgSO4
 - Postpartum medication and check-ups
- Discuss ICU needs and possibilities of treatment in developing countries
- Discuss possible difficulties in treatment process in developing countries
- Counsel patients on the risk for recurrence in future pregnancy and long term health consequences
- Understand importance of family planning after a event of hypertensive disorder in pregnancy

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What is eclampsia?

Eclampsia is defined as a blood pressure of >140/90 mmHg, and usually >160/90 mmHg with seizures in pregnancy. Eclampsia can, but does not always have to have some or all of the features of HELLP syndrome.

Eclampsia can lead to uncontrolled severe hypertension, pulmonary edema, renal dysfunction (poor renal output/oliguria/anuria), thrombocytopenia, cerebral edema, cerebral vascular accidents (stroke), abruption placentae, DIC, scotomata, blurred vision, blindness (rare), non-reassuring fetal status, and fetal demise.

Lecture

Please watch the lecture on the atypical presentation of preeclampsia and eclampsia by Dr. Diana Wolfe (Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Women's health, Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine).

Outcomes

When you have completed Learning Unit 3, you will be able to:

- Define mild and severe preeclampsia
- Understand the pathophysiology of preeclampsia
- Identify patients at risk of preeclampsia and discuss prevention strategies
- Recognize and explain possible maternal consequences of preeclampsia
- Explain and discuss the management of preeclampsia. Including:
 - Assessment of maternal condition
 - Assessment of fetal condition
 - Delivery considerations, including timing and mode of delivery
 - Medication considerations, including antihypertensive drugs, analgesics, MgSO₄, drug availability and preparing and mixing drugs
- Discuss delivery considerations in preeclampsia
- Discuss research to come to evidence based medicine guidelines for low- and middle income country setting
- Counsel patients on the risk for recurrence in future pregnancy and long term health consequences