EFFECTS OF ABDOMINAL DECOMPRESSION ON FETAL UMBILICAL ARTERY AND MIDDLE CEREBRAL ARTERY BLOOD FLOW

Sara Mugerli, Gordana Njenjić, Vesna Fabjan Vodušek, Miha Lučovnik

Institution:
Division of Perinatology, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology,
University Medical Center Ljubljana, Slovenia
e-mail: sara.mugerli@gmail.com

BACKGROUND:
Abdominal decompression is a method where an airtight frame exerting negative pressure is placed at a pregnant woman’s abdomen. This was supposed to improve utero-placental blood flow but the effects of decompression on fetal circulation haven’t been adequately studied yet.

OBJECTIVE:
We utilized doppler ultrasonography to investigate the effects of decompression on blood flow in the umbilical artery and middle cerebral artery.

METHODS:
Women with singleton pregnancies attending antenatal abdominal decompression were enrolled in the study. Doppler velocity waveforms were obtained from umbilical artery and fetal middle cerebral artery before and after a 30 minutes decompression session. Resistance indices were compared using Student’s t test (p<0.05 significant).

RESULTS:
23 pregnant womed were included at an average gestational age of 36+1 weeks. The mean resistance index before decompression in the umbilical artery was 0.58±0.10 and after decompression 0.54±0.07 (p=0.06). In the middle cerebral artery the values were 0.72±0.11 and 0.77±0.08, respectively (p=0.01).

CONCLUSION:
Significantly increased resistance index in the middle cerebral artery implies a higher fetal brain oxygenation after decompression. This is further corroborated by the trend towards a decrease in umbilical artery resistance index. Our findings could be beneficial in high-risk pregnancies, e.g. preventing prematurity complications in cases of IUGR or late preterm hypertensive disorders of pregnancy.