

INTRODUCTION

Despite the rapid growth of Women's Health as part of Internal Medicine training, the majority of internists receive little formal teaching in the care of women with medical problems in pregnancy. Both lack of a consistent patient base to provide teaching cases and the daunting broadness of the topic probably contribute to this situation. As a result, the pregnant woman with medical problems may find herself in a gap between her obstetrician who is confident managing her pregnancy, but uncomfortable with her medical problems and her internist, who would be confident continuing to care for her medical problems if only she were not pregnant. As internists at one of the largest obstetric centers in the United States, we felt uniquely situated to develop a curriculum that might serve as an example of how residency training programs can cover the core aspects of obstetric medicine in the context of many other curricular demands. The basic elements of that curriculum are contained in this syllabus. It is this curriculum material that we ourselves use on a monthly basis for teaching Internal Medicine PGY 3 residents from Brown University who rotate on our busy inpatient and outpatient medical consultation service.

In developing our curriculum, we used a retrospective review of our own consultations, relevant literature, and our pooled teaching experience to develop a core group of brief (10-15 minute) lectures. The content of each lecture is focused and definitive with an emphasis on the practical. Our goal is to cover the major physiologic and clinical concepts necessary for an internist to adequately begin to conduct consultation for pregnant women with medical problems. Many of the questions likely to arise from the lectures are addressed in more detail in the reference material listed in the bibliography which accompanies each section.

This curriculum is divided into 14 separate teaching topic sections. Each section contains a *learner handout* which provides the clear definitive statements around which the lectures are structured. Each handout provides space for the learner to make their own notes. The handout is followed by a *teaching script*- a narrative summary of the material covered in the lecture for use

by the teacher. We have also included at least one sample *teaching case* for each lecture topic that we hope will be useful for reinforcing the lecture points. In our experience, using these cases at the end of each brief lecture engages the learners in a different way and serves to stimulate additional questions and interest in the topics. Each section then closes with a *bibliography* that may be useful to both learner and teacher.

We have utilized the material in this curriculum at our own and other institutions continually over several years. Resident response to the format and content has been extremely favorable, even by those who did not have day to day clinical exposure to pregnant patients. Our experience suggests that this program can be successfully implemented in other internal medicine residency programs, even those in which exposure to pregnant patients is limited. We hope that you find the material helpful, and that it stimulates an interest in your program to provide more teaching to internal medical residents in the area of obstetric medicine. We welcome your comments and suggestions on the material presented herein, and wish you well in your use of it.

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