

A Qualitative Review and Perinatal Audit of Drug Abuse in Singapore

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Background and Objectives

Drug use during pregnancy can have detrimental effects on pregnancy and can lead to poor child health outcomes. It is paramount to perform local qualitative review and perinatal audit on a regular basis to gain the clinical knowledge and relevant information on the care and management of these patients with drug abuse during pregnancy. This will help professionals gain current insights in the management & counselling of pregnant women with drug substance abuse and in developing effective policies & guidelines on drug abuse in pregnancy. Our aim was to assess the performance of the healthcare system and care provided to the patients with drug abuse in pregnancy.

Methods

A perinatal audit of cases of substances abuse in pregnancy from 2010 to 2020 was performed. Case records of substance drug abuse (excluding alcohol and tobacco) over the last 10 years from 2010 - 2020 were sourced via ICD 10 Diagnosis extracted from the medical records registry. The performance of the healthcare system and care provided to the patients with drug abuse in pregnancy were assessed by an audit based on the World Health Organization (WHO) 16-point checklist, which was developed in response to the identification and management substance use disorders in pregnant women .

Results

There was a total of 20 women with perinatal drug abuse between 2010 and 2020. Three of the 20 women engaged in drug abuse for 2 of their pregnancies each, making 23 pregnancies affected by substance abuse during this period. The prevalence of substance abuse among pregnant women was 0.018% (23/128576) or 1 in 5,590 pregnant women. The most common substance abuse in pregnancy was heroin with 11 cases (55.0%). Results from the audit based on the World Health Organization (WHO) 16-point checklist showed that the perinatal care for the pregnant women with drug abuse in pregnancy generally fulfilled the audit checklist of standard of care. Pregnant women with drug abuse were appropriately identified during antenatal screening visit, referred to the appropriate multidisciplinary team including obstetricians, psychiatrists & psychologists, mental wellness and social worker for assessment and evaluation before rendering comprehensive assessment, and individualized care.

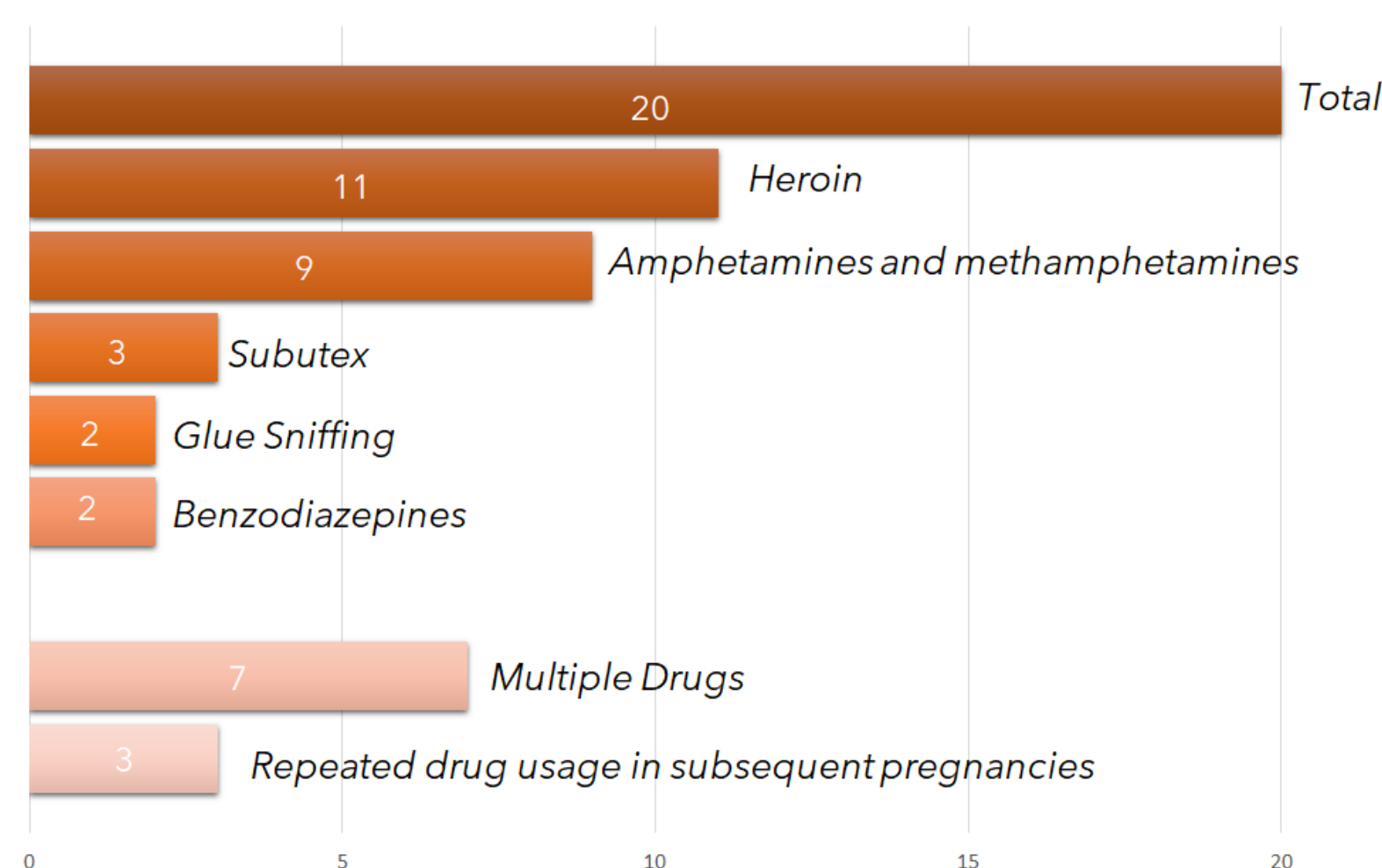
Cases from 2010-2020

20 Women with **23** Pregnancies **128,576** TOTAL DELIVERIES

0.018%
2010-2020

Prevalence of 0.018% over 10 years
1 in 5,590 pregnant women

Substance drug abuse of 20 cases



Audit findings

- 14 out of 20 (70%) pregnant women were asked about the use of substance misuse during the antenatal visits. 3 out of 20 cases (15%) having drug relapses in subsequent pregnancies.
- 16 out 20 (80%) of cases were provided comprehensive assessment and individualized care. However, there was still 20% (4/20) who were not reviewed by psychiatry or mental wellness during their clinical visit or admission to hospital for various medical problems.
- 3 out of 20 cases (15 %) had drug relapses in subsequent pregnancies despite medical help provided to cease drug use.

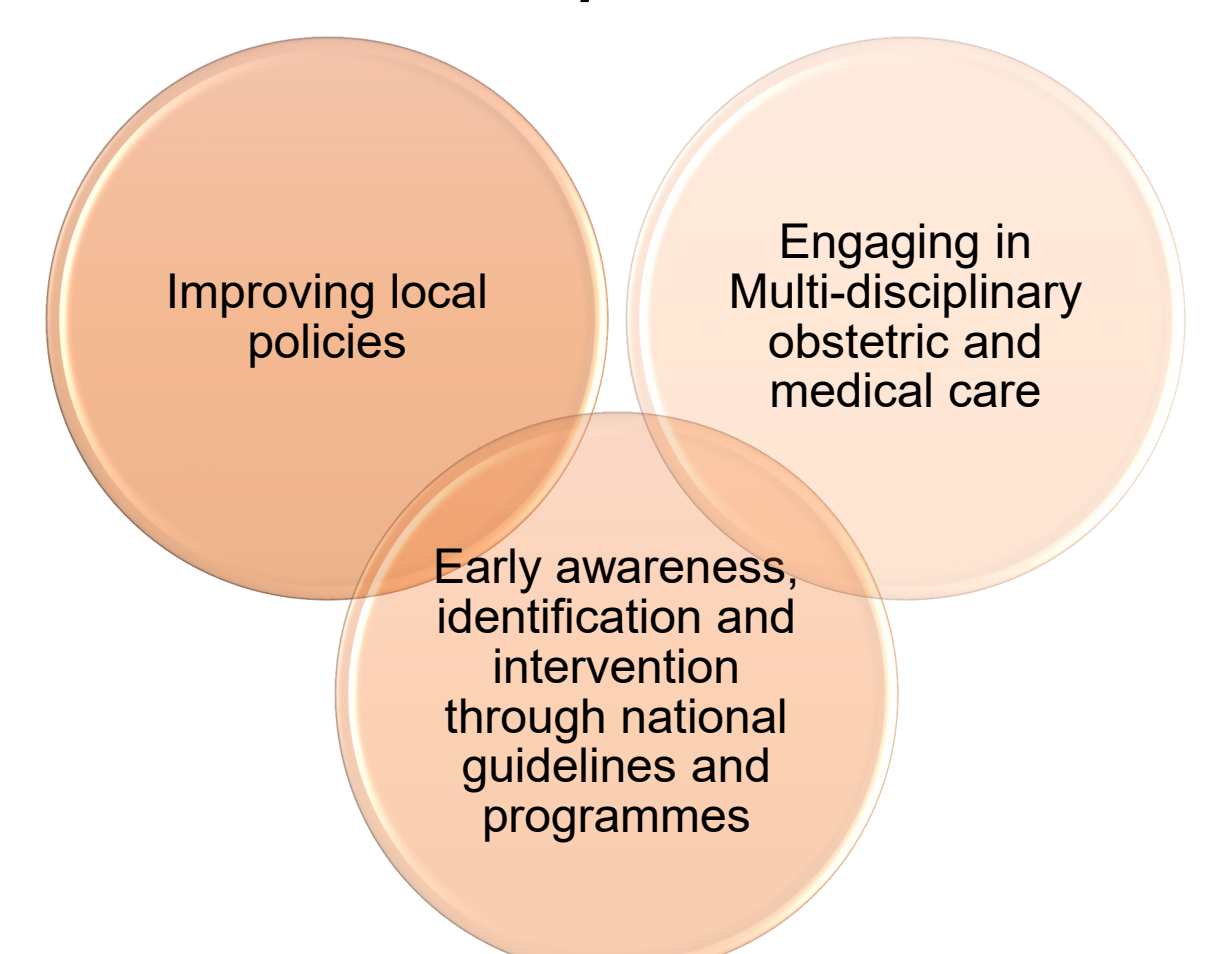
Discussion / Conclusion

- Commendable efforts by CNB to reduce rates of substance abuse in Singapore, resulting in very low rates of drug abuse in pregnancy.
- Paramount to incorporate public and patient education to mitigate potential risks.
- Early intervention and initiation of appropriate support services are important.
- Need for a multidisciplinary approach for prevention and management of substance abuse in pregnancy.

Future directions

- Improving Policies to ensure and enhance comprehensive antenatal & perinatal obstetric care with multi-disciplinary inputs need to be developed, encouraged, sustained and implemented well at all levels.
- A local registry on drug abuse in pregnancy, in collaboration with Ministry of Health National Registry of Diseases which allows access to medical information and collect data on various health conditions in Singapore) may be considered to promote accurate monitoring in local setting can be carried in the future.

Future Improvements



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