

## Case Report

### Sudden Death In Advance Twin Pregnancy: A Case Report

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#### Abstract

Pregnancy is the condition of having a developing embryo or foetus in the female, when an ovum is fertilized by spermatozoa. In twin pregnancy there are two developing foetus in the uterus. The present case is a 29 years old lady with 33 weeks twin pregnancy, who died suddenly and brought for medico-legal autopsy. On examination all the organs were found pale. Heart was found enlarged. Left lung was found to be adherent to the under surface of lungs and chest wall. Post-mortem hypostasis was faint and not fixed. Heart, lungs and liver has been send for Histo-pathological examination. Opinion regarding cause of death was kept pending till the receipt of histopathology report.

This is a case of sudden death in advanced pregnancy coming to the mortuary of Forensic Medicine, Gauhati Medical College and Hospital. Such cases emerging as a major burden now days and needs thorough discussion. Hence this case was discussed in details.

**Key Words:** Pregnancy, Sudden death, Autopsy, Twin pregnancy

#### Introduction:

Pregnancy is a condition which occurs in the female when an ovum is fertilized by a spermatozoon and she carries a fertilized ovum within the uterus. [4, 6] About seven days after fertilization, the ovum reaches the uterine cavity and implants itself in the uterine wall. [5]

Children born at or after 210 days of uterine life are viable. [6] When more than one foetus develops in the uterus, it is called multiple pregnancies. [1] In twin pregnancy there are two developing foetus in the uterus and this is the commonest form of multiple pregnancy. [1, 6]

In India the incidence of twin pregnancy is about one in 80. [1] The commonest presentation in twin pregnancy is both vertex (60%), followed by first vertex and second breech (20%). [1] The duration of pregnancy can be determined by: [2, 3]

- Measuring the level of the height of fundus of uterus from symphysis pubis. Up to 12 weeks the uterus cannot be felt above the level of pubic symphysis. At 16 weeks it can be felt just above pubic symphysis, at 20 weeks it reaches midway between the pubic symphysis and the umbilicus.

At 24 weeks at the level of umbilicus, at 28 weeks midway between the umbilicus and Xiphoid tip and at 32 weeks it can be felt at the level of Xiphoid tip. Thereafter during the last 8 weeks uterus tends to fall forward and sinks in pelvis.

- Macdonald's rule, i.e. the number of lunar months of pregnancy = height of fundus of uterus above symphysis pubis in cms/ 3.5cm. [3]

#### Case Report:

On 7<sup>th</sup> December' 2013 a case was brought to the mortuary for autopsy by the Dispur police (a local police station of Guwahati).

On examination it was found to be a female dead body of average built wearing a nightie. The present case is a 29 years old lady with 33 weeks twin pregnancy, who died suddenly and brought for medico-legal autopsy.

History reveals that she had also hypothyroidism, diabetes and her Hb% at 28 weeks was 7gm%. The attendant also gives history of uterine fibroid detected in her early pregnancy.

#### Autopsy Findings:

On external examination fundal height is 32 cms above symphysis pubis, so using Macdonald's formula the duration of pregnancy is around Nine months. (Fig. 1)

Post-mortem hypostasis is faint and not fixed. Rigor mortis is present and fully developed. On internal examination all the organs are found to be pale. Heart is found to be enlarged and contains liquid blood about 30 ml.

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Petechiae are seen at places. (Fig. 2) Weight is 320gms. Pleura is found adherent to the chest wall and lungs on left side.

Size of the uterus is found to be 40cm×28cm. Three tumour like masses (fibroid) were found in the uterus, one anteriorly and two posteriorly. (Fig. 3) On dissection of the uterus two female fetuses were found in the uterus, one in the vertex and other in the breech position.

Both the placenta was found attached to the fundus of the uterus. (Fig. 4) Both the cords were found to be attached to the placenta and the fetuses. (Fig. 5) The length of the fetuses was found to be 48 cm and 50 cm respectively. (Fig. 6) The heart, lungs and the uterine masses has been send to the Department of pathology for Histo-pathological examination. The finding of the heart shows ventricular thickening, the lung finding was not significant, and the uterine masses were sub-mucus fibroids.

Death was opined to be due to **Anaemic Heart Failure**. Time since death was approximately 12-24 hours.

**Discussion:**

Sudden death during pregnancy is emerging as a major burden in our society now days. This can be easily prevented by regular medical checkups and proper education to the patients and their attendants.

In twin pregnancy as the demand is more, the mother requires more care and should seek medical attention at an early period.

The Hb% was 7 during 1<sup>st</sup> checkup and also there were three fibroids detected during the 1<sup>st</sup> checkup. The patient also had diabetes and hypothyroidism detected during pregnancy.

These patients should be referred to the higher centres for further treatment.

But in this case the patient was neither send nor was advised. These cases require more attention and care. The private practitioner should refer the cases beyond their limitation to the respective specialist at an early period.

The private practitioner use to keep even the cases is beyond their scope and branch. **So the main question is whether it is a case of ignorance, negligence or a mishap.** So it is our duty to prevent such kind of catastrophes.

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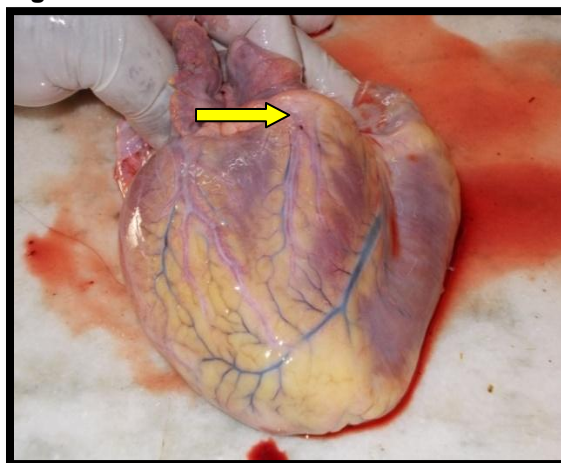
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**Fig 1: Enlarged Abdomen**



**Fig 2: Petechiae in the Heart**



**Fig. 3: Enlarged Uterus**

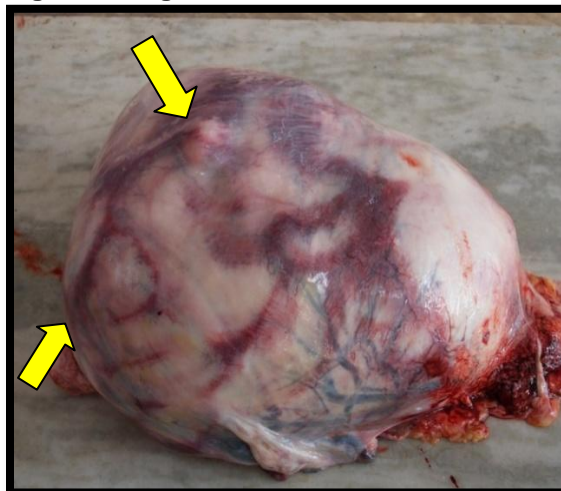


Fig. 4: Two fetuses' one in Vertex and other in Breech Position



Fig. 6: Both Fetuses



Fig. 5: Showing the Fetuses

