2.3 Care pathway for women presenting with decreased fetal movements from 28 weeks' gestation

Care pathway for women presenting with Decreased Fetal Movements (DFM) from 28 weeks' gestation

Clinical Practice Points

If a woman has concerns about strength or frequency of fetal movements, advise her to come in for assessment as soon as possible.

Risk factors for stillbirth

- Previous stillbirth
- Previous preterm birth with SGA
- Presence of fetal growth restriction/SGA
- Previous reporting of DFM
- Maternal overweight or obesity (BMI ≥25)
- Smoking
- Advanced maternal age (over 35 years)
- IVF pregnancy
- Parity of 0 or ≥3
- Pre-existing diabetes
- Antepartum haemorrhage
- Indigenous ethnicity
- Low socioeconomic status

Examination

- Abdominal palpation to assess uterine tone & tenderness, fetal lie/presentation
- Symphyseal fundal height (SFH) to be measured in centimetres & plotted on growth chart
- Handheld ultrasound Doppler is recommended, not auscultation with a stethoscope or Pinard.
- Record maternal pulse rate & confirm as different to fetal heart rate.
- Blood pressure and temperature

СТС

- Perform within 2 hours of presentation
- Perform for at least 20 mins or until satisfactory. If unsatisfactory as per RANZCOG Guidelines, seek urgent medical review.
- Use maternal fetal movement recorder during CTG

Ultrasound

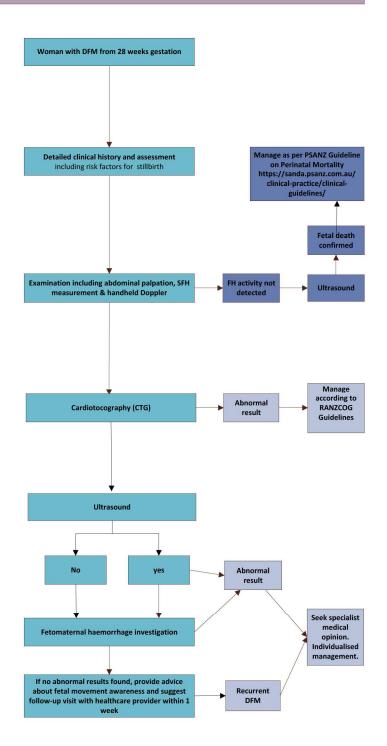
- Consider ultrasound within 24 hours.
- Include fetal biometry, amniotic fluid volume, and morphology (if not already performed).
- Placental and fetal Doppler assessment, as indicated.
- The timeframe to perform this investigation will depend on the clinical circumstances and availability of appropriate expertise.

Fetomaternal haemorrhage

- Perform Kleihauer test or flow cytometry test, where feasible.
- MCA Doppler assessment may be performed where expertise in ultrasonography is available.

Advice to women

- Be aware of baby's movements daily
- 'Kick counting' may be helpful for some women to increase awareness
- Come to hospital promptly, same day or night, if concerned about a decrease in strength or frequency of baby's movements
- Provide the PSANZ patient information brochure (https://sanda.psanz.com.au/parent-centre/ pregnancy/)



Disclaimer: This algorithm is for general guidance only and is subject to a clinician's expert judgement. The algorithm should not be relied on as a substitute for clinical advice.