

Original Article

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Multidisciplinary Integrated Care for Pregnant Women and Their Families with Diagnosis of Fetal Congenital Heart Diseases

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Abstract

Advances in prenatal cardiac screening have resulted in an increasing number of prenatal diagnoses of congenital heart diseases (CHDs). To assist the expectant mothers and their families, we established an integrated care model that provides accurate diagnosis of fetal CHD, prenatal counseling, and referral as needed. We used self-developed patient decision aids. Moreover, a fetal nurse coordinated the pregnancy care management plan, offered support, and assisted these families through the process of shared decision-making (SDM). Among the participating families, 228 received prenatal counseling from fetal cardiologists, 64 received prenatal counseling from pediatric cardiologists and cardiovascular surgeons, and 27 participated in a multidisciplinary meeting in the third trimester. After completing the SDM process with the health care team, 75 families opted to terminate the pregnancy, and 120 mothers delivered in a tertiary center. Among the neonates with severe CHD, seven received interventional catheterization and 40 received cardiac surgery soon after birth. With the integrated care of the multidisciplinary team for the full prenatal-to-postnatal period, we helped the expectant mothers and their families to understand CHD, supported them through the process of decision-making, and assisted in reducing their anxiety. The proposed care model also allows for transfer of expectant mothers to specialized wards for critical CHDs, optimizes perinatal management, and possibly improves outcomes.

Keywords: Multidisciplinary integrated care, prenatal counseling, prenatal diagnosis, congenital heart diseases