



Ectopic Pregnancy

Are we underutilising medical management?

Dr. Rachel Lines, SHO Nelson Hospital *rachelmarylines@gmail.com*

Introduction

Ectopic pregnancies occur when a fertilised ovum implants outside of the uterine cavity. This occurs in approximately 1-2% of pregnancies. Medical management, using methotrexate can be effective for selected women. Success rates for methotrexate have been shown to be approximately 90% when used appropriately ⁽¹⁾.

Methods

A retrospective audit was undertaken of all women who presented to Nelson hospital in New Zealand from 1st January 2012 until December 31st 2017 with a diagnosis of an ectopic pregnancy.

There were 101 ectopic pregnancies over the 6-year period. Eligibility for each management option was analysed based on symptoms, contraindications and guidelines as per NICE/RCOG (table).

Results

83% of presentations were surgically managed. Only 9 (9%) women had medical management, although the proportion meeting the criteria for this was 31/101 (31%).

Of the women who received methotrexate, only two (22%) required further treatment.

Were those eligible for medical management offered this? (documented)

Yes	48%
No	52%

Criteria for medical management

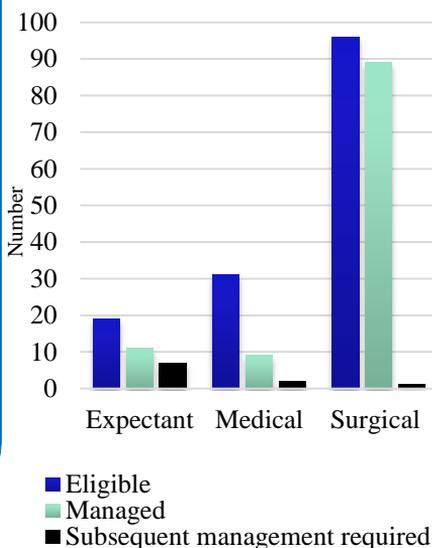
No significant pain, stable

HCG <5000IU/L

Unruptured adnexal mass <35mm with no FHR

Able to adhere to follow up

Management of women with ectopic pregnancy based on eligibility



Conclusion

- The majority of ectopic pregnancies are managed surgically, however medical management using methotrexate can be a safe and effective option in selected women.
- In the population studied, less than a quarter of women eligible for medical management undertook this option. Increased education and discussion may facilitate more women to utilise this option and avoid surgical intervention

1. Elson CJ, Salim R, Potdar N, Chetty M, Ross JA, Kirk EJ on behalf of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Diagnosis and management of ectopic pregnancy. BJOG 2016; 123:e15–e55.

2. Six-year audit of the management of ectopic pregnancy. Cooray H, Harilall M, Farquhar CM. Aust N Z J Obstet Gynaecol. 2003

3. NICE Guideline: Ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage: diagnosis and initial management. Dec 2012.