Educational Topic 9: Preconception Care

Rationale: The proven benefits of good health prior to conception include a significant reduction in maternal and fetal morbidity and mortality.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

A student should be able to:

- Describe how certain medical conditions affect pregnancy
- Describe how pregnancy affects certain medical conditions
- Assess a patient’s genetic risk as well as father’s genetic risk with regard to pregnancy
- Describe genetic screening options in pregnancy
- Recognize a patient’s risk of substance abuse and intimate partner violence and explain how this would be addressed with a patient
- Appraise a patient’s nutritional status and make recommendations to the patient on nutrition and exercise
- Assess a patient’s medications, immunizations and environmental hazards in pregnancy
- Identify appropriate folic acid intake
- Identify ethical issues associated with prenatal genetic screening and diagnostic tests

TEACHING CASE

CASE: You have been Mary’s doctor for the past 3 years. She is a 39-year-old Caucasian woman with a BMI of 32.9 who sees you primarily for her idiopathic chronic hypertension, which is well controlled on an ACE inhibitor. She has smoked 1 pack of cigarettes per day for the past 20 years. She is in today for her annual exam and mentions that she is getting married in a few months and would like to start a family. She has never been pregnant before.

On physical exam, her BP=138/84, Ht=5’ 2”, Wt=180 lbs. Otherwise, her exam is unremarkable.
COMPETENCY-BASED DISCUSSION & KEY TEACHING POINTS:
Competencies addressed:
• Patient care
• Medical knowledge
• Interpersonal and communication skills
• Professionalism

1. What is the goal of counseling a woman about pregnancy prior to conception?

2. What are the major topics that should be discussed or addressed with any woman prior to conception?

A provider who is skilled in the care of obstetric patients may perform counseling. However, the assistance of a maternal-fetal medicine specialist or genetic specialist may be necessary in certain circumstances.

3. For the patient in this case, what specific topics need to be addressed?

REFERENCES