

The spectrum of liver and gastrointestinal disease seen in cholestasis of pregnancy

Reyes,

A mild form of intrahepatic cholestasis is an infrequent complication of pregnancy, with a spontaneous cure almost immediately after delivery and that often recurs in future pregnancies. Pruritus alters maternal well-being, and a subclinical steatorrhea may impair the patient's nutritional status; otherwise, it is a mild disease in the mother, and no maternal mortality has been attributed to it. In contrast, cholestasis of pregnancy is often identified as a risk of increased perinatal morbidity and mortality. The cause of cholestasis of pregnancy is unknown. A hereditary predisposition seems to induce in the maternal liver an abnormal reaction to female sex hormones, but some still unidentified environmental (possibly dietary) factor could also be involved in the pathogenesis of the disease. Pruritus, but not the biochemical alterations, can be alleviated by the use of cholestyramine, silymarin, or epomediol. Ursodeoxycholic acid has been beneficial in pruritus and in liver function te