Clinical manifestation of herpes zoster during pregnancy and its impact on perinatal outcome

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Detailed reports on the impact of herpes zoster during pregnancy are rare. Objective: To investigate the clinical manifestations of herpes zoster during pregnancy and its impact on perinatal outcome in Koreans. From 2006 to 2010, a total of 38 pregnant and 40 non-pregnant women with herpes zoster were included for the investigation of the dermatomal distribution, characteristics and degree of pain, treatment modalities, and complications. In a pregnant group, we also checked gestational age and parity at disease onset, delivery methods, fetal birth weight and height, congenital abnormalities, and the occurrence of the congenital varicella syndrome, neonatal varicella or zoster within 1 month after birth. There was no significant difference in anatomical distribution of herpes zoster in both groups. Mean severity of initial pain was significantly increased in pregnancy (p=0.039). Only 11 pregnant women (28.9%) took antiviral agents or systemic analgesics whereas 26 in control (65.0%) took these medications. Compared to the 4 in control (10.0%), 3 pregnant patients (7.9%) experienced postherpetic neuralgia, but with no other serious complications. Congenital varicella syndrome, neonatal varicella or zoster was not found. Pregnancy itself does not seem to exert detrimental impact on herpes zoster and that maternal zoster seems to have no harmful effects on neonates.

Key Words: herpes zoster, pregnancy, perinatal outcome