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978-0-521-26827-1 - Obstetric and Intrapartum Emergencies: A Practical Guide to Management

Edwin Chandraharan and Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran

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A Practical Guide to Management

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521268271

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First published 2012

3rd printing 2015

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Obstetric and intrapartum emergencies : a practical guide to management / [edited by] Edwin Chandraharan, Sabaratnam Arulkumaran.

p. ; cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-26827-1 (pbk.)

I. Chandraharan, Edwin. II. Arulkumaran, Sabaratnam.

[DNLM: 1. Pregnancy Complications – therapy. 2. Delivery,

Obstetric – methods. 3. Emergencies. 4. Emergency

Treatment – methods. 5. Obstetrics – methods. WQ 240]

618.3 – dc23 2012019945

ISBN 978-0-521-26827-1 Paperback

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Contents

Preface vii
Acknowledgements viii
List of contributors ix

Section 1 – General Principles

- 1 **Anatomical and physiological changes in pregnancy and their implications in clinical practice** 1
 Niraj Yanamandra and Edwin Chandrahara
- 2 **Principles of resuscitation for maternal collapse** 9
 Renate Wendler

Section 2 – Algorithms for Management of the Top Five ‘Direct Killers’

- 3 **Deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism** 15
 Tahir A. Mahmood and Adnan Hasan
- 4 **Severe preeclampsia and eclampsia** 24
 Lucy Higgins and Alexander Heazell
- 5 **Massive obstetric haemorrhage** 33
 Vivek Nama and Edwin Chandrahara
- 6 **Sepsis and septic shock in pregnancy** 41
 Nicola Lack and Austin Ugwumadu
- 7 **Amniotic fluid embolus** 48
 Derek Tuffnell and Hlupekile Chipeta

Section 3 – Intrapartum Emergencies

- 8 **Uterine rupture** 52
 M. F. M. Rameez and Malik Goonewardene
- 9 **Breech delivery** 59
 Osama Abu-Ghazza and Edwin Chandrahara

- 10 **Umbilical cord prolapse** 68
 Malik Goonewardene
- 11 **Fetal compromise: diagnosis and management** 78
 Edwin Chandrahara
- 12 **Shoulder dystocia: diagnosis and management** 88
 Edwin Chandrahara and Sabaratnam Arulkumaran
- 13 **Twin delivery** 93
 Deepal S. Weerasekera
- 14 **Instrumental vaginal delivery** 98
 Vikram Sinai Talaulikar and Sabaratnam Arulkumaran
- 15 **Emergency caesarean section** 107
 Chitra Ramanathan and Leonie Penna
- 16 **Unintended trauma and complications during caesarean section** 115
 Osama Abu-Ghazza and Edwin Chandrahara

Section 4 – Postpartum Emergencies

- 17 **Acute puerperal uterine inversion** 120
 Hemantha Senanayake, Probhodana Ranaweera and Mohamed Rishard
- 18 **Sudden postpartum maternal collapse** 126
 Karolina Afors and Amarnath Bhide
- 19 **Retained placenta** 132
 Kapila Gunawardane
- 20 **Perineal trauma** 138
 Stergios K. Doumouchtsis

Contents

Section 5 – Medical and Surgical Emergencies during Pregnancy

- 21 **Palpitations during pregnancy** 145
Niraj Yanamandra and Edwin Chandraharan
- 22 **Breathlessness** 150
Michael Egbor and Hassan Shehata
- 23 **Abdominal pain in pregnancy** 154
Archana Krishna and Edwin Chandraharan
- 24 **Blurring of vision and sudden loss of vision in pregnancy** 163
Anomi Panditharatne and Edwin Chandraharan
- 25 **Psychiatric emergencies** 170
Andrew Kent and Lorraine Cleghorn
- 26 **Drug overdose in pregnancy** 176
Lakshman Karalliedde and Inidika Gawarammana
- 27 **Diabetic ketoacidosis in pregnancy** 185
Ingrid Watt-Coote and Julia Kopeika
- 28 **Convulsions and epilepsy** 191
Julia Kopeika and Ingrid Watt-Coote
- 29 **Musculoskeletal considerations in pregnancy** 198
Hiran Amarasekera
- 30 **Endocrine emergencies in pregnancy** 204
Manilka Sumanatilleke

Section 6 – Anaesthetic Emergencies

Section Editor: Anthony Addei

- 31 **General anaesthesia and failed intubation** 214
Sarah Hammond and Christina Wood
- 32 **Fluid overload and underload** 221
Renate Wandler
- 33 **Transfusion, anaphylactic and drug reactions** 227
Rehana Iqbal and Cheron Bailey

- 34 **Major trauma including road traffic accidents** 233
Kirsty Crocker and Tim Patel

Section 7 – Neonatal Emergencies and Resuscitation

- 35 **Neonatal resuscitation and the management of immediate neonatal problems** 241
Anay Kulkarni, Justin Richards, Nigel Kennea and Siromi Gunaratne

Section 8 – Management of Anticipated and Non-anticipated Emergencies

- 36 **Morbidly adherent placenta** 250
Nilesh Agarwal, Richard Hartopp and Edwin Chandraharan
- 37 **Peri- and postmortem caesarean section** 256
Priyantha Kandanearachchi and Edwin Chandraharan

Section 9 – Setting up Skills and Drills Training in Maternity Services

- 38 **Setting up and running labour ward fire drills** 260
Karolina Afors and Edwin Chandraharan
- 39 **Simulation training** 264
Emma Evans and Polly Hughes
- 40 **Risk management (emergency obstetric and intrapartum care)** 269
Jessica Moore

Index 275

Preface

Pregnancy and childbirth should be a safe and rewarding experience for women and their families, as well as for maternity healthcare providers. However, it is estimated that globally over 300 000 women die during pregnancy and childbirth every year, largely due to substandard care. Even in the United Kingdom, the latest Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths Report suggests that substandard care may contribute to approximately 70% of all maternal deaths.

Substandard care is often due to 'too little being done too late', especially whilst managing emergencies during antepartum, intrapartum and postpartum periods. Failure to recognise warning symptoms and signs of complications, lack of knowledge and skills, failure to seek appropriate experienced or multi-disciplinary input, as well as failures in team working and effective communication, contribute to maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality.

The book aims to promote evidence-based emergency obstetric and neonatal care both in well-resourced and less well-resourced countries. We have attempted to include 'practical algorithms' for quick reference, a scientific basis for proposed actions for obstetric and intrapartum emergencies and illustrations, where appropriate. In recognition of the fact that over 90% of women die in less well-resourced countries with limited resources, we have included a section on 'Suggested management in low resource settings'. In addition, 'Key facts', 'Pearls' and 'Pitfalls' are included for easy reference.

We are greatly indebted to the authors who come from diverse backgrounds and experience, for not only sacrificing their time, but also for sharing their knowledge and expertise. There has been a collective effort from midwives, trainee obstetricians and gynaecologists, senior obstetricians, anaesthetists, neonatologists, perinatal psychiatrists, toxicologists, physicians and surgeons, from both well-resourced and

less well-resourced countries to make pregnancy and childbirth safer for women and their babies. We are indeed delighted to edit this textbook with contributions from such a diverse group of authors that truly reflect the multi-professional and multi-disciplinary care that every pregnant woman and her baby fully deserve.

We have attempted to structure the sections for easy reference, starting with anatomical and physiological changes during pregnancy and their implications on clinical practice, followed by algorithms for the management of the 'Top five killers'. In addition to common antepartum, intrapartum and postpartum emergencies, we have also included management of uncommon but potentially life-threatening emergencies such as drug overdose, road traffic accidents and endocrine and musculo-skeletal emergencies.

We wish to thank our Section Editor for Anaesthetic Emergencies, Dr Anthony Addei for ensuring that common anaesthetic emergencies such as failed intubation, fluid underload and overload and transfusion reactions are addressed.

Effective management of obstetric and intrapartum emergencies involves continuous multi-disciplinary training and education. The Section on 'Setting up skills and drills in maternity services' is aimed at aiding continuously improving care and outcomes for women and their babies.

We hope this textbook will be useful for midwives, medical students, trainee as well as senior obstetricians, anaesthetists and neonatologists both in the well-resourced and less well-resourced countries.

Let us work together to ensure that no woman or her baby should die due to substandard care by optimising management of obstetric and intrapartum emergencies.

Edwin Chandraharan
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to sincerely thank each and every author for their generous contributions of their time, knowledge and expertise. We would like to acknowledge the hard work of Ms Sue Cunningham of St George's University of London, who provided admin support. We are very grateful to Mr Nick Dunton, Ms Katie Hickling, Ms Nisha Doshi, Mr Robert Sykes and Ms Lucy Edwards from Cambridge University Press for their invaluable support and professionalism.

We are greatly indebted to our family, Anomi, Ashane and Avindri Chandrharan, and Gayatri, Shankari, Nishkantha and Kailash Arulkumaran for their patience, tolerance and understanding.

Last but not least, we wish to thank all our patients and their babies, who have taught us what we know and for inspiring us to write this book.

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