New Obstetrics & Gynaecology Department

The New Structure

The new O&G Department was set up in 2010 with the appointment of Dr Tak Yuen FUNG as Chief of Service. We were honoured to have Professor Hextan NGAN, President of the Hong Kong College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, as our officiating guest at the opening ceremony of the O&G Centre on April 12, 2011 (Figure 1). While we now have five O&G Specialists in the Department, we are most grateful for the long-term and continuous partnership of Dr Nancy FOK as our Honorary Consultant. The purpose of setting up this Department is to improve the quality and safety of the O&G service in the Hospital. With the kind and unreserved support of Dr FOK, we have been able to form a 2-tier call system to cover any obstetrics emergency.

Initiatives to Contain Referrals to NICU

NICU capacity is one of the major limiting factors in coping with the increasing demand for maternity services. Admission to the NICU in turn is largely a result of preterm delivery and foetal abnormalities.
We have accordingly instituted the following measures to contain the number of NICU referrals.

a) **Prenatal Diagnosis**

Ultrasound scanning can now detect certain major foetal abnormalities to save some NICU beds. We have acquired a state-of-the-art 4D Ultrasound Scanner Philips IU22 (Figure 2) to enhance the quality of prenatal morphological diagnosis (Figure 3). Chorionic villus sampling for karyotyping can be carried out as early as 11 weeks of gestation to exclude chromosomal abnormalities and genetic problems of the foetus.

b) **Cervical Length Assessment**

Preterm delivery before 34 weeks of gestation, either iatrogenic or spontaneous, is a major cause of NICU admission. Among cases with spontaneous preterm delivery, only one third have a history of preterm delivery. Nevertheless, cervical length has been shown to correlate with the risk of preterm delivery: the shorter the cervix, the higher the risk. Assessment of cervical length (Figure 4) between 20 to 26 weeks of gestation is now available in HKBH. The risk of preterm delivery at 28, 31, 34 and 37 weeks can be calculated based on cervical length and previous obstetrics history. If the risk is high, progesterone can be used, which can reduce the risk of preterm delivery by 44%.

c) **New Guideline for Elective Caesarean Section**

We have issued new guidelines on elective Caesarean sections, recommending that, to avoid the risk of neonatal respiratory distress syndrome, the operation should not be performed earlier than 38 weeks of gestation, unless indicated.

d) **New Neonatal Resuscitation Protocol**

Working with the paediatricians and anaesthetists, we have adopted the New American Heart Association Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Care (Published in November 2010). It has been shown to improve neonatal outcome with new measures such as using room air instead of 100% oxygen. As a result, new equipment has been acquired (Figure 5).

The number of referrals to the NICU in the first 3 months of 2011 was only 0.65% of births, which is lower than the benchmark of 1% set in other hospitals.
Policy on Management of Delivery Number

We have reserved a protected quota of 3,000 (250/month) for local mothers who present before 20 weeks of gestation, representing more than a 50% increase compared with previous years.

Other Quality-enhancement Initiatives

As a responsible O&G department, we do not and will not freely refer all the complicated cases, such as placenta previa, to public hospitals. We will expect obstetricians to record the placental site in the admission form, so that appropriate precautions can be taken, eg, cross match enough blood, and two obstetricians to perform the Caesarean section for cases of major placenta previa.

Renovation work on the Nursery is in the pipeline, aiming to alleviate congestion and improve the holding capacity of the Special Care Baby Unit, to take care of newborn babies who require only short observation or are waiting for transfer to the NICU.

On the gynaecology side, we will enhance services in minimally invasive gynaecological procedures. We have set up a hysteroscopic procedure room (Figure 6) in the O&G Centre. A convenient one-stop ambulatory service will be provided to patients with menstrual disorders, abnormal bleeding, and suspected endometrial polyps.

The O&G Department will continue to work with all associate doctors to provide a safe and high quality service to patients in the HKBH.

Dr Tak Yuen FUNG
Chief of Service
Obstetrics & Gynaecology
Defining the List of High-risk Aerosol-generating Procedures

It is now widely recognised that most respiratory viral infections are not airborne but are transmitted by large respiratory droplets. These include influenza and even SARS. This conclusion is based on the best scientific evidence and, during the pandemic, the WHO infection control recommendations are based on this presupposition. However, there are procedures that can generate aerosol, making airborne transmission possible even for influenza. Special precautions are then required, including the use of an N95 respirator. Now that the pandemic is over, both the US CDC1 and WHO² have finalised their lists of high-risk aerosol-generating procedures in their guidelines and it would be worthwhile to compare them. Actually, they are rather similar.

- Both WHO/CDC: Intubation, bronchoscopy, autopsies, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, open suction of airways.
- CDC only: Extubation, sputum induction.
- WHO only: Collection of lower respiratory tract specimens.

Basically, they are in agreement. Note that non-invasive ventilation (NIV) (ie, BiPAP, CPAP) and nebulisation are not included in either list. In fact, for both of these procedures, in recommendation 1.3, the WHO guideline stipulates the measures needed as “Standard and Droplet Precautions”.¹ Please refer to this guideline for more details.²

A thorough review of the literature was undertaken to compile these lists. The nebuliser was incriminated in a large SARS outbreak in Hong Kong, but the final study by Wong et al did not find confirmatory evidence.³ It stated “our findings demonstrated efficient transmission even before the nebulizer therapy was begun”. As for the medical students who were infected, “no association was observed between their [the students] stay in the ward at the specific periods when the nebulizer was used”⁴. Another study from Taiwan also clearly reported that the nebuliser “would not be an infectious source for SARS”⁵.

As for NIV, there are only two studies that may incriminate these procedures. Fowler et al found higher infection rates for healthcare workers during intubation (p<0.001) and NIV (p=0.5), but the latter was not statistically significant.⁶ This had been pointed out already by others in the same journal.⁷

Finally, Yu et al reported the higher risk of NIV in a case control study.⁸ However, this is a retrospective study, which includes data backdating several years. The WHO has written to the journal’s editor listing at least six possible sources of bias.⁹ Therefore, the WHO has not accepted these papers as an adequate level of evidence and welcomes presentation of new data. Nevertheless, no new data have been presented since the Human Swine Influenza (HSI) guideline was introduced in 2009.

Dr Wing Hong SETO
Consultant Microbiologist (Part-time)
Florence Nightingale Pledge

I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly, to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully.

I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug.

I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling.

With loyalty will I endeavor to aid the physician in his work, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.

History of International Nurses Day

In the fall of 1854, Nightingale and 38 female volunteer nurses were dispatched to the location of the British military camp in the Ottoman Empire. There was a shortage of medicine, and ignorance about hygiene. Infections were uncontrolled and often fatal. It was here that the dedicated Nightingale earned her famous nickname “The Lady with the Lamp”, because, even after the rest of the medical staff had retired for the day, she persisted in making her solitary rounds in the dark.

International Nurses Day (IND) is celebrated every year on May 12, the birth date of Florence Nightingale. She made many improvements to nursing and health care and notably and radically cut the death rate among soldiers in the Crimean War as a result of her hard work, devotion and guidance of fellow nurses. The International Council for Nurses in America commenced commemorative activities in 1965, although it was not formally recognised by the US Government until 1974.

Nurses Month and Celebration Activities in Hong Kong Baptist Hospital

The theme of IND 2011 is “Closing the Gap: Increasing Access and Equity”, whereas the theme in Hong Kong is “Quality and Safety”. To partake in this global event, and to join the international community in giving recognition and encouragement to our nurses, we at HKBH will celebrate this annual event from May 3 to June 1. Activities in this Nurses’ Month in HKBH include a buffet lunch, quiz, skin moisture test, bone density test, education seminars and award presentations. We are sure that our nurses will continue the devotion and passion of Florence Nightingale in providing safe quality care to our patients.

Dr Raymond Chung I CHEN  Ms Samantha Yuen Chun CHONG
Chief Executive Officer  Chief Nursing Officer

* This modified “Hippocratic Oath” was composed in 1893 by Mrs Lystra E. Gretter and a Committee for the Farrand Training School for Nurses, Detroit, Michigan. It was called the Florence Nightingale Pledge as a token of esteem for the founder of modern nursing. Source: The American Nurses Association
Editorial Enquiry
We would like to hear from you! Any questions, comments or suggestions are always welcome. Please email us at pr@hkbh.org.hk

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:9. (NIV)