

ABSTRACT

Background

In the literature the clinical relevance of HPV infection in pregnancy is still controversial. Conflicting reports have been published on the HPV maternal-fetal transmission, on perinatal infection progression to clinical lesions, whether genital, laryngeal, or oral, on timing of the delivery in HPV positive woman, and on the treatment of condylomata during pregnancy.

Aim of the study

The aim of the present study is to clarify, through a review of the literature, the clinical management of the pregnant woman with a genital HPV infection, with particular reference to the delivery modality, maternal-fetal transmission and woman counselling.

Study development

The study is divided into two main sections: the first one regards some general issue on HPV infection, the second one is about the clinical relevance of the viral infection in pregnancy.

In the first section are provided data about HPV epidemiology, HPV biology, macroscopic and microscopic patterns of HPV lesions, and diagnostic techniques.

A specific paragraph is devoted to the oncogenic role of the HPV infection.

In the second section the clinical management of the pregnant woman with HPV infection, the treatment modalities, the HPV maternal-fetal transmission, the significance of juvenile laryngeal papillomatosis, and delivery modalities are discussed.

A specific paragraph is devoted to the obstetrical counselling to the woman with HPV genital infection.

Conclusion

The clinical significance of HPV infection in pregnancy is still misunderstanding. The lack of a correct knowledge on virus biology and characteristics has lead to overemphasize the pathogenetical role of HPV, principally regarding newborn acquired infection. The information available in this study may be useful to avoid mismanagement of the pregnant woman with genital HPV infection.