

Neurosurgery Abstracts

Title: THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF IN UTERO DIAGNOSIS FOR CENTRAL NERVOUS ANOMALY IN JAPAN

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Background:

With the advent of the diagnostic tools such as MRI and ultrasonogram, the diagnosis of the central nervous anomaly in utero become relatively easy. The Japanese Society for Pediatric Neurosurgeons started to have a symposium for in utero diagnosis for central nervous system anomaly to discuss the role of the neurosurgeons. During the discussion, we started to feel whether neurosurgeons have the same opinion to the one of gynecologist or neonatologists.

Method:

We made a survey to know the current opinion of the in utero diagnosis for central nervous anomaly to gynecologists and/or neonatologists. We sent it to educational hospitals in Japan.

Results:

Retrieve the answer from approximately half of the centers. The survey was sent to both gynecologists and neonatologists, but the answers were mainly from gynecologists. Most of gynecologist use ultrasonogram for routine work up. When they feel further investigation would be needed, they use both ultrasonogram and MRI to further examination. Amniocentesis or genetic examination tend to use less often. When they find severe anomaly they discuss with family members whether to terminate pregnancy or not, if the pregnancy is less than 22 weeks gestation. Because of the law in Japan, we do not terminate pregnancy after 22 weeks of gestation. The meaning of severe anomaly differ from one to the others. Some answered that myelomeningocele or meningocele are considered as severe anomaly. More than half centers, neither neurologist nor neurosurgeon were included for discussion with family. Many gynecologists mentioned that current technique for in utero diagnosis is not efficient to understand the prognosis of the patients.

Conclusion:

In utero diagnosis for central nervous anomaly is very effective to decide the way of delivery and making a plan for treatment in advance. There are many ethical and practical problems to solve. We feel that we should discuss the issue further and in detail multidisciplinary and internationally.