



PerinatalPath

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What can placentas tell us?

The placenta is an amazing organ essential for the growth of the fetus, providing a source of nutrients (and toxins) and a mechanism for disposing waste. Over the course of nine months this essential organ performs these vital functions, and then is discarded by the body after delivery of the baby and readily available for study. It can reveal many clinically important abnormalities with prognostic significance.

Microscopic examination of the placenta can show signs of **Chronic Intrauterine Hypoxia** such as **Chorangiosis**, **Increased Syncytial Knots** and **Advanced Maturation with Increased Twigs**. These chronic changes may be difficult to determine clinically, but may cause profound abnormalities in the outcome of the infant. **Fetal hypoxia** has been associated with **Abnormal Neurologic Development**. **Funisitis** has also been associated with a 10% incidence of cerebral palsy.

The placenta can also indicate the possibility of **Coagulation Abnormalities** in the mother. **Maternal Floor Infarcts and Gitter Infarcts/Massive Perivillous Fibrin Deposition** have been associated with abnormalities of clotting substances as **Factor V Leiden, anti-Thrombin III and Proteins C and S**. These may cause other health problems for the mother. Treatment could improve both the mother's health and the outcome of future pregnancies.

Examination by a pathologist knowledgeable about placentas may provide significant clinical data which could be used to optimize outcomes of the infants, mothers and future pregnancies. This information is also valuable to help understand what caused unfavorable outcomes and avert unnecessary malpractice suits.

Please contact me for any further information.