

Understanding recurrent pregnancy loss: Causes, Diagnosis, and Management.

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Introduction

Recurrent pregnancy loss (RPL), defined as two or more consecutive pregnancy losses before 20 weeks of gestation, remains a distressing and emotionally overwhelming experience for couples desiring to conceive. Affecting approximately 1–2% of women, RPL is a multifactorial condition that poses both clinical and psychological challenges. Despite advances in reproductive medicine, the exact etiology of RPL often remains elusive in many cases, further complicating diagnosis and treatment.[1,2].

Several potential causes have been identified in the pathogenesis of recurrent pregnancy loss. These include genetic anomalies, anatomical abnormalities of the uterus, endocrine disorders such as uncontrolled diabetes and thyroid dysfunction, and immunologic factors including antiphospholipid syndrome. Additionally, lifestyle and environmental influences like smoking, excessive caffeine or alcohol consumption, and exposure to environmental toxins may contribute to increased pregnancy loss risk. [3,4].

Genetic causes, particularly chromosomal abnormalities, are significant contributors. Couples may carry balanced translocations or other structural chromosome rearrangements that can result in unbalanced embryos and subsequent miscarriage. Karyotyping of both partners and genetic analysis of the products of conception are often useful in determining the likelihood of genetic etiology. For some couples, preimplantation genetic testing (PGT) during in vitro fertilization (IVF) may be a helpful strategy to increase the chances of a successful pregnancy [5,6].

Anatomical factors, including uterine malformations such as septate uterus or intrauterine adhesions, can impair proper implantation and fetal development. These conditions are usually diagnosed through imaging modalities such as hysterosalpingography, saline infusion sonography, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Surgical correction, especially hysteroscopic procedures, has shown promising outcomes in improving pregnancy rates in such cases. Hormonal imbalances and metabolic disorders also play a pivotal role in recurrent pregnancy loss. Luteal phase defects, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), and poorly managed thyroid or insulin levels may create a suboptimal environment for embryo implantation and development. Managing these

conditions with appropriate medical therapies, lifestyle modifications, and close monitoring can enhance the chances of a successful pregnancy [7,8].

Immunological factors, particularly antiphospholipid syndrome (APS), have been extensively studied in relation to RPL. APS is characterized by the presence of antiphospholipid antibodies which can lead to thrombosis and interfere with placental development. Treatment with low-dose aspirin and heparin has proven effective in improving live birth rates among women diagnosed with APS. However, not all immunological causes of RPL are well understood, and research in this area is ongoing. The evaluation of recurrent pregnancy loss should be comprehensive and personalized, encompassing a full medical history, physical examination, laboratory testing, imaging studies, and psychological support. Despite thorough investigation, up to 50% of RPL cases remain unexplained, which can be frustrating for both clinicians and patients. Nevertheless, the prognosis remains hopeful, as many women with RPL eventually achieve a successful pregnancy with supportive care and close monitoring [9,10].

Conclusion

Advances in diagnostic tools, personalized treatment strategies, and psychological support systems are crucial in managing RPL. Continued research and awareness are essential to improve outcomes and provide reassurance to affected couples navigating this challenging reproductive.

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