Pregnancy and lung cancer: Balancing maternal and foetal health.

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Abstract

Pregnancy is a time when women experience significant changes in their bodies. Unfortunately, this period can also be a challenging time for those diagnosed with lung cancer. Lung cancer is a type of cancer that originates in the lungs and can spread to other parts of the body. It is one of the leading causes of cancer deaths worldwide. In this article, we will discuss the topic of pregnancy and lung cancer, including the challenges that women face when managing both conditions and the potential risks associated with treatment.

Keywords: Pregnancy, Lung Cancer, Chemotherapy, Physiological changes.

Introduction

The diagnosis of lung cancer during pregnancy can be devastating news for women. The treatment of lung cancer usually involves chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and surgery, all of which can harm the developing foetus. Furthermore, pregnant women with lung cancer face unique challenges in managing both conditions. They must balance their own health with the health of their unborn child. Another challenge is the delay in diagnosis due to pregnancy-related symptoms such as shortness of breath and coughing, which are also symptoms of lung cancer. These symptoms may be attributed to the normal physiological changes of pregnancy, making it difficult to diagnose lung cancer early [1].

The treatment options available for pregnant women with lung cancer depend on the stage and type of lung cancer, the gestational age of the foetus, and the overall health of the mother. In some cases, doctors may recommend delaying treatment until after the baby is born. However, this option is not always possible, especially if the cancer is advanced. Chemotherapy is a common treatment for lung cancer, but it can harm the developing foetus. Some chemotherapy drugs can cause birth defects, miscarriage and stillbirth. However, some chemotherapy drugs are safe to use during pregnancy and doctors can adjust the dose and schedule to minimize the risk to the foetus. Radiation therapy is another treatment option, but it is generally avoided during pregnancy because it can harm the developing foetus [2].

Surgery is also a treatment option for lung cancer, but it can be risky during pregnancy. Depending on the stage and location of the cancer, surgery may be delayed until after the baby is born. In some cases, minimally invasive surgery may be an option that minimizes the risk to both the mother and the foetus. The risks associated with treatment for lung cancer during pregnancy depend on the type and stage of cancer, the treatment options, and the gestational age of the foetus. Chemotherapy during the first trimester is associated with a higher risk of birth defects, miscarriage, and stillbirth. However, chemotherapy during the second and third trimesters is less harmful to the foetus [3, 4].

Radiation therapy during pregnancy can harm the developing foetus, especially during the first trimester. However, in some cases, radiation therapy can be used during the second and third trimesters if the benefits to the mother outweigh the risks to the foetus. Surgery during pregnancy is generally avoided during the first trimester because it is associated with a higher risk of miscarriage. However, surgery during the second and third trimesters is generally safe for the mother and the foetus. Overall, the risks associated with treatment for lung cancer during pregnancy must be balanced with the potential benefits. The decision to undergo treatment during pregnancy requires careful consideration and consultation with a multidisciplinary team of healthcare providers, including obstetricians, oncologists, and neonatologists. [5].

Conclusion

Managing lung cancer during pregnancy can be challenging for women, but it is essential to balance maternal health with foetus health. The diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer during pregnancy require a multidisciplinary approach, and the decision to undergo treatment must be made carefully, weighing the risks and benefits for both the mother and the foetus. Early detection of lung cancer in pregnant women is critical to ensure the best possible outcomes for both the mother and the baby.

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