

2012 ADIPS Annual Scientific Meeting – Gold Coast

The Gold Coast provided a beautiful backdrop for the 2012 ADIPS Annual Scientific Meeting. A few of the highlights included Helen Murphy's fascinating talk on her research into providing pre-pregnancy care. It highlighted the vital role of pre-pregnancy care in improving perinatal outcomes in children of women with diabetes, along with challenges of engaging those most at risk of poor outcomes before they become pregnant. In her cohort, women who attended pre-pregnancy counseling had pre-pregnancy HBA1cs of 7.2% versus 8.1% prior to conception. With only 50% of subjects achieving a HBA1c of less than 7% she reminded us there is still much work to be done in improving glycaemic control of women with diabetes in pregnancy.

Christine Tippett highlighted the challenges of deciding when to deliver women with diabetes – on the one hand avoiding prematurity and on the other preventing stillbirth – a condition still poorly understood. She highlighted the uncertainty in this area by outlining the differences in recognised guidelines. She also discussed the diversity of mothers with diabetes – making a 'one fits all' approach to delivery inappropriate and importance of tailoring this to the individual. She gave great insight into the role of foetal surveillance with ultrasound monitoring. While it has an established role in IUGR, it is not reliable to monitor for foetalmacrosomia and shoulder dystocia. In fact, she said abdominal palpation by an experienced clinician was just as accurate – reminding us the clinical history and examination of the mother is still paramount.

The correlation between diabetes and pregnancy was discussed by Stephen Tong – including the recent exciting advances in this area leading to the possibility of novel therapies including pravastatin and even L-arginine bars!

For all the budding researchers in the audience, the session on research strategies by Carolyn Allan, Wah Cheung and Robert Moses certainly provided food for thought. The practical advice kept coming - from finding funding, to choosing an appropriate journal and maximizing your chances of publication with a long title with colons. Certainly something I shall be keeping in mind for the future!

Finally, talks by Tim Donovan and Leonie Callaway provided useful insight on what to do with the baby once it arrives. Managing the common complication of hypoglycaemia has been based on small studies looking at the threshold at which neurological injury occurs, with results of current studies pending to confirm intervention is at the right glucose threshold. Due to early separation and other factors, establishing breastfeeding in these babies can be problematic with more research greatly needed to ensure good long-term outcomes for these neonates.

The many other excellent presentations ensured a full house the whole time, with everyone looking forward to 2013's instalment!