

Staying Alert for Early Detection of Hydatidiform Mole

Gestational trophoblastic diseases are a kind of potentially fatal gynecological diseases and hydatidiform mole is the most common type of the diseases. In Hong Kong, about 4 hydatidiform moles occur in every 1,000 deliveries.

Gestational trophoblastic diseases arise from the placental trophoblasts. It is believed that hydatidiform moles are chromosomally abnormal androgenetic pregnancies resulting in early death of the babies in the uterus. The placental tissues undergo cystic changes and produce grape-like cysts. Mothers at the two extreme ends of reproductive age fall into high-risk groups for these diseases.

One major symptom of having hydatidiform mole is abnormal vaginal bleeding complicating early pregnancy resembling miscarriage. The grape-like cysts of hydatidiform mole may progress to malignant diseases.

Patients with hydatidiform mole, after surgical removal of the grape-like cystic lesions by suction evacuation, need to undergo follow-up consultation to keep close monitoring of their serum and urine human chorionic gonadotrophin (HCG) hormone level for more than one year.

The Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong, conducted research on this disease to improve the diagnosis and progress prediction. By microsatellite genotyping and chromosome in situ hybridization, the diagnosis of hydatidiform mole can become more accurate. Four parameters have also been found to better estimate the possibility of malignant progress.