Introduction

Worsening of retinopathy after bariatric surgery has been reported (1) and there has been a recent small cohort stating the same (2). However to our knowledge this is the first report of occurrence in pregnancy post bariatric surgery with a previous diagnosis of type 2 diabetes mellitus.

Background

The obesity epidemic has meant there are increasing numbers of women of child bearing age undergoing bariatric surgery. Some have had or have a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes mellitus with or without complications. Experience in this group of women is limited but increasing. The Karolinska institute looked at 2543 women who underwent bariatric surgery of various forms (gastric banding, gastric bypass and vertical banding) and compared against age, parity and BMI matched women (n=12000) and found that in this group there was a statistically significant higher preterm birth rate at 9.7 % compared to 6.1 % (5). There has also been a recent pilot study looking at progression in retinal disease after Bariatric surgery (she had a Roux en gastric bypass (01/2012), 11 pregnancies.

Case

A 33 year old female, with an apparent diagnosis of diabetes in remission, presented to the joint antenatal clinic at 28/40 gestation for a GTT, having had 2 previous pregnancies. She had undergone a Roux en gastric bypass (01/2012), 11 months prior to this pregnancy so GGT was avoided to prevent dumping syndrome. BM monitoring was commenced. The referring midwife at booking stated she was told that her diabetes had “gone away,” was in remission. However no recent pre-conception HbA1c was availableand recent retinal screening had not been attended. She had a history of type 2 diabetes mellitus since 2005, retinopathy and hypertension. Her BMI was 55 with a weight of 145 kg pre-surgery (she had a 10kg weight loss with Liraglutide). Post-surgery her weight was 102 kg giving her a booking BMI of 36. Diabetic medications were discontinued at this stage as glycaemia had rapidly improved, see table below. BMs were out of pregnancy targets at 28 weeks and metformin commenced. Given her past history urgent retinal examination was requested, revealing proliferative retinopathy and she underwent urgent pan- retinal laser. Particular attention was given to her micronutrients requirements. Her elective section was uneventful, BMs remained stable 4-7 and she had subsequent follow up in the diabetes clinic.

Clinical Assessment

Clearly this patient had a history of obesity and type 2 diabetes. The gastric bypass surgery gave her a massive reduction in her BMI and probably increased her fertility. She did however become pregnant prior to recommended guidance and upon booking with the midwife felt her diabetes had gone away, which clearly was not the case. She only presented to the joint ANC for consideration of an OGTT which was contraindicated due to the risk of profound dumping syndrome.

At this stage it was clear that her diagnosis needed review and urgent retinal screening was arranged. Notably the findings in this case concur with the retinal changes found in the study (6). The presence of previous pro-proliferative changes, and bariatric surgery causing rapid weight loss (BMI 53 to 36 in 12 months), reduction in HbA1c (12.6 % to less than 7 %) and pregnancy may well have had an additive affect on her retinal changes and the need for urgent laser therapy.

Discussion

We know from the Swedish NHS birth register study that women are at an increased risk of pre-term and small for gestational age births post-surgery (3) as a result of a review of the key results of the Swedish Obese Subjects Trial in which diabetes prevention and remission were secondary end points showed after 2 years, 72 % of patients with T2DM at baseline were in remission in the post-surgical group- however 50 % relapsed after 10 years (4). This case highlights the need to ensure appropriate education regarding the metabolic and fertility sequelae after surgery. Currently there is no UK guidance surrounding GDM screening post bariatric surgery, these may need to be patient and procedure specific i.e. personalised medicine.

Learning Points

Post bariatric patients need pre-conception advice and careful review when pregnant. National guidance with specific reference to appropriate choice of test for gestational diabetes is needed, as in the US and parts of Europe. Specific laboratory measurements for Folate, B12, Ferritin, and vitamins should be considered every trimester, with oral vitamin supplements. Pre-conception counselling is key in all patients of child bearing age undergoing bariatric surgery. In addition the terminology used for those who become normoglycaemic post surgery is very important and the term diabetes in remission is recommended. Any patients with complication in this group must continue upon the diabetic screening programme.

References

2. Thomas RL. ADA Poster 2013.

Helen Dobson is the lead diabetes specialist nurse, DAFNE and pump trainer with an interest in preconception and antenatal care at MYNHST.