

# **GYNAECOLOGY & OBSTETRICS UPDATE**

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I wish you all

***Merry  
Christmas  
and  
Happy  
New Year***

## **Gynaecology and Obstetrics Update?**

Advances in Obstetrics and Gynaecology are overwhelmingly fast. To be able to give our patients an excellent service both in the primary care and hospital settings: this service should be both evidence and scientifically-based and should be regularly updated. This Newsletter is a step to regularly update myself, my team and the General Practitioners with the most recent published important clinical data and guidelines. I will also include answers on the most commonly asked questions by my colleagues; the GPs. I would be delighted to receive any comments, questions or ideas to improve the Newsletter which will initially be even 3 months.

## **Antenatal Iron Therapy**

The normal haematological adaptations to pregnancy are frequently misinterpreted as evidence for iron deficiency that needs correction. A possible advantage claimed for high levels of haemoglobin in pregnancy is that the woman would be in a stronger position to withstand haemorrhage. There is no evidence to support this claim. Indeed as a low haemoglobin in healthy pregnant women generally implies a large circulating blood volume and it is possible that women with low haemoglobin may better withstand a given loss of blood. Two well conducted trials showed that iron supplementation resulted in an increase in the prevalence of preterm birth and low birth weight due to the increased viscosity of maternal blood that follows the iron induced macrocytosis and increased haemoglobin concentration which may impede the utero-placental blood flow. Therefore low haemoglobin with no other evidence of iron deficiency requires no treatment. If there is evidence of genuine iron deficiency iron therapy will be indicated. Mean cell volume may be the most useful indicator of iron deficiency as it is not closely related to haemoglobin concentrations and declines quite rapidly in the presence of iron deficiency.

**Cochrane database, 1997**