

Vertical Transmission of Three Common Viruses

Rebecca Erb,* Haley Ramirez,* Abigail Schmidtberger*

Faculty: Gina Brown

Department of Physician Assistant, College of Health Professions

There are a number of viruses that typically cause only mild illness if acquired by healthy individuals but cause significantly higher morbidity and mortality to pregnant patients and developing fetuses. Cytomegalovirus, parvovirus, and enterovirus are three common viruses capable of vertical transmission in the prenatal and perinatal windows. It is imperative for primary care providers to have knowledge of the potential risks of contracting these viruses during pregnancy and complications of subsequent vertical transmission to the fetus. This review paper discusses the basic pathophysiology of viral transmission, important signs and symptoms, appropriate diagnostic testing, treatment options, and preventative practices to decrease maternal infection and vertical transmission. Information was retrieved from the following electronic databases: CINAHL, MEDLINE, and Cochrane library. The CDC and UpToDate were also used as sources. Using these references, this paper provides primary care providers with the information necessary for identifying and preventing viral illnesses in pregnancies. This knowledge can lead to earlier interventions, referral to appropriate specialists, and reduction in morbidity and mortality.