

DIABETES IN PREGNANCY

Rebuttal to “It means that a pregnant woman with diabetes is at risk of going blind”

1. What is the evidence that a pregnant woman with diabetes in Ireland went blind due to pregnancy? **There is no evidence.**
2. Type 1 diabetes is an extremely challenging condition for a patient on every day of their life. They must live with the burden of having diabetes and knowing that they are at-risk of chronic complications. It is even more challenging during pregnancy. **It is upsetting for such patients to be told that they might go blind during pregnancy, especially when there is no evidence of this happening in Ireland.**
3. In Ireland, modern care of diabetes in pregnancy is delivered by specialist diabetes doctors and nurses in the obstetric hospitals. During pregnancy patients have more frequent monitoring and so even better care. A core part of this care is expert eye review such that they have even better care during pregnancy than at any other time.
4. About 2 pregnant patients per year need intervention with laser therapy, which is a routine outpatient treatment. **There are no reports of blindness.**
5. Finally, there is a national screening programme, called RetinaScreen, that monitors all patients with diabetes for eye disease by yearly photographs of the back of the eye (called fundal photographs). This is an extremely successful program. The standard of care is that all patients with diabetes should have a RetinaScreen exam prior to pregnancy; this reduces even further the likelihood of diabetic eye disease during pregnancy.

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