



For media interviews, contact:

Kerri Wade for SMFM

kwade@smfm.org

+ 1 (202) 517-6121

Leading Experts in Obstetric Care Issue New Recommendations for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Maternal Sepsis

Timely Care Can Save Lives and Prevent Organ Damage

Washington, DC, April 8, 2019 – Among continued efforts to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality, the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) released new recommendations related to the diagnosis and treatment of sepsis. The “[SMFM Consult Series 47: Sepsis During Pregnancy and the Puerperium](#),” is endorsed by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

Sepsis is not a specific illness; rather it is a syndrome characterized by life-threatening organ dysfunction. Sepsis in pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of preterm birth, prolonged recovery, stillbirth and maternal death. In 63% of maternal sepsis deaths, independent reviewers found substandard care, most often a delay in recognition or management of sepsis, and most often on the obstetric unit of the hospital.

The new “SMFM Consult Series” and accompanying resources detail seven specific recommendations for obstetric care providers. “The treatment of sepsis during pregnancy should follow the same basic principles in the nonpregnant population,” said Judette Louis, MD, an author of the publication and the president-elect of SMFM. “Our goal is to improve care and prevent future sepsis deaths or organ damage caused by sepsis.”

To better diagnose and treat sepsis, SMFM has also released a new podcast called, “[Sepsis](#),” featuring Drs. Judette Louis and Tony Kendle that summarizes the new publication.

There are certain risk factors that increase the likelihood of maternal sepsis, including nulliparity, black race, public or no insurance, cesarean delivery, assisted reproductive technologies and multiple gestations. “The rate of sepsis appears to be increasing,” said Dr. Louis. “Therefore, it is increasingly important to identify sepsis early and save women’s lives.”

###

About SMFM

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) is a non-profit, membership organization based in Washington, DC. With more than 3,500 physicians, scientists and women's health professionals around the world, the Society supports the clinical practice of maternal-fetal medicine by providing education, promoting research and engaging in advocacy to optimize the

health of high-risk pregnant women and their babies. SMFM hosts an annual scientific meeting in which new ideas and research related to high-risk pregnancies are unveiled and discussed. For more information, visit www.smfm.org.