

Utility of the Kleihauer-Betke Test in the Assessment of Women Presenting with Reduced Fetal Movements at Term

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Introduction: Reduced fetal movements (RFM) at term is one of the most common clinical presentations to maternity assessment units. The use of a Kleihauer-Betke test (KBT) to screen for fetal-maternal haemorrhage in this group is often utilised. Evidence of fetal anaemia on CTG and ultrasound is a clear indication to deliver a term fetus. However, when CTG and ultrasound are normal, it is unclear if ordering a Kleihauer has a role to play in the workup of term reduced movements.

Aims: To determine the frequency by which a KBT is taken in women presenting with RFM at term at Peninsula Health and the rate of positive tests.

Methods: A retrospective audit of all women greater than 37 weeks gestation presenting with RFM between January and September 2022.

Results: A total of 384 presentations were audited, and it was surprisingly found that a KBT was sent in only 2.3% of presentations (n=9). Of these presentations, 0% of tests were positive (n=0).

Discussion: The clinical utility of the KBT has long been called into question. An observational cohort study found that routinely performing the KBT for all women presenting with RFM has no impact on the management or outcome of these women.(1) This retrospect audit data further adds to this conclusion.

Reference: Rudra T, Pathmanathan U, Amoako A. Is Routine Kleihauer-Betke Test Useful Tool in the Management of Women with Decreased Fetal Movements?. Aust N Z J Obstet Gynaecol. 2019 Jan 1;59(S1):50.

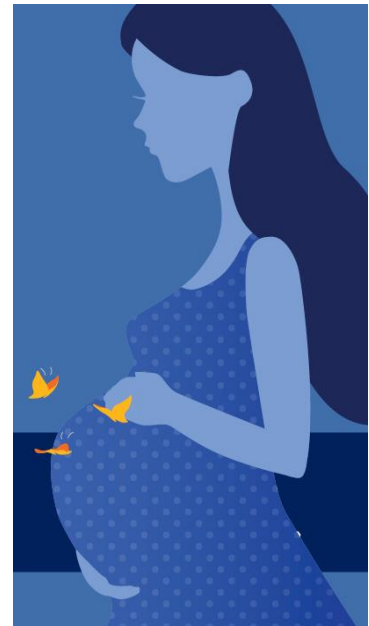


Image Reference: Movements Matter, Stillbirth CRE website: <https://stillbirthcre.org.au/parents/safer-baby/movements-matter/>