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Class Prep – Fetal Monitoring

Using your textbook (pp. 356-373, 383-385) and the provided PowerPoint, answer the following questions.

1. What are common causes of fetal tachycardia?

Common causes of fetal tachycardia are interruption of fetal oxygenation, fetal cardiac arrhythmias, maternal fever, infection, some meds, maternal hyperthyroidism, and fetal anemia.

2. What causes late decelerations?

Late decelerations are caused by a reflex fetal response to transient hypoxemia during a uterine contraction that reduces the delivery of oxygenated blood to the intervillous space of the placenta.

3. What causes variable decelerations?

Variable decelerations are caused by compressions of the blood vessels in the umbilical cord and can occur with or without uterine contractions

4. What is the cause of early decelerations?

Early decelerations are caused by transient fetal head compression and is considered a normal and benign finding.

5. What are accelerations a response to?

Accelerations are a response to fetal movement, elicited by fetal scalp or vibroacoustic vibrations, or transient compression of the umbilical vein, causing decreased venous return and a reflex rise in fetal heart rate. Some other causes are vaginal exam, electrode application, fetal reaction to external sounds, breech presentation, occiput posterior position, uterine contractions, fundal pressure, and abdominal palpation.

6. What is the normal range for the fetal heart rate?

The normal range for the fetal heart rate is 110-160 beats per minute.

7. What category tracing (I, II, or III) clearly indicates a fetus in distress?

Category III indicates a fetus in distress.

8. What equipment is used to evaluate contractions with external monitoring?

The tocotransducer measures the frequency and duration of contractions externally.

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9. What fetal heart pattern is the most concerning?

The most concerning fetal heart pattern is absent baseline variability with recurrent late decelerations, recurrent variable decelerations, or bradycardia, and a sinusoidal pattern.

10. What is the most important indicator of fetal status?

The most important indicator of fetal status is the baseline fetal heart rate response to uterine contractions.