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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?

The common causes of fetal tachycardia are interruption of fetal oxygenation resulting in metabolic acidemia, fetal cardiac arrhythmias, maternal fever, infection, parasympatholytic drugs (atropine, hydroxyzine) maternal hyperthyroidism, fetal anemia, and drugs (caffeine, cocaine, methamphetamines)

2. What causes late decelerations?

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

3. What causes variable decelerations?

Variable decelerations are caused by compression of the blood vessels in the umbilical cord and can occur with or without UC's.

4. What is the cause of early decelerations?

Early Decelerations are caused by transient fetal head compressions and is considered normal and benign findings.

5. What are accelerations a response to?

Accelerations are visually apparent, abrupt increase in FHR above the baseline rate. Accelerations can be either periodic or episodic, they may occur in association with fetal movement or spontaneously. If acceleration do not happen spontaneously they can be elicited by fetal scalp or vibroacoustic stimulation. Another cause is transient compression of the umbilical vein, resulting in decreased fetal venous return and a reflex rise in heart rate.

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

110-160 bpm

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

Category III

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

Tocodynamometer- picks up uterine contractions and displays on graph paper. The ultrasound device is placed over the fetal back and transmits information on the fetal heart rate.

9. What fetal heart pattern is the most concerning?

Late decelerations

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

Amniotic fluid levels