

Lecture Abstract

Event: Webinar on COVID-19 in Pregnancy

Date: March 3, 2022

Chair: Prof. Liona POON

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly reshaped the landscape of obstetric and perinatal care, presenting unprecedented challenges for healthcare providers managing pregnant and lactating women. From clinical management strategies to vaccination decisions, the rapidly evolving evidence base has demanded continuous adaptation and multidisciplinary collaboration. This APCMFM E-zone session brings together a distinguished panel of international and local experts in maternal-fetal medicine, infectious diseases, and paediatrics to address the most pressing questions surrounding COVID-19 in pregnancy.

The program opens with an introduction by Prof. Liona POON, setting the stage for a series of focused presentations. Dr. Patrick O'Brien, Vice President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (UK), will deliver the first talk on the **Management of COVID-19 in pregnant women**, drawing upon international guidelines and clinical experience to outline best practices for risk stratification, monitoring, and treatment of infected pregnant individuals. Following this, Prof. Grace LUI, Head of the Division of Infectious Diseases at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, will provide a localized perspective on the **Management of COVID-19 in Hong Kong**, discussing the unique challenges, healthcare system responses, and lessons learned from managing the pandemic within the local context. A moderated discussion will follow, allowing for an interactive exchange between these two speakers and the audience.

The second half of the session will delve into two critical topics at the intersection of maternal and infant health. Dr. María del Mar Gil, Consultant in Fetal Medicine and Obstetrics at Hospital Universitario de Torrejón, Spain, will address the question: **Can women with COVID-19 breastfeed?** This presentation will explore the evidence on viral transmission through breast milk, the protective role of antibodies, and practical guidance for supporting breastfeeding during maternal infection. Prof. Tony NELSON, Clinical Professional Consultant and Professor of Practice in Paediatrics at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, will then tackle the timely and often contentious issue of **Should pregnant and lactating women get vaccinated against COVID-19?** Drawing

on the latest safety and efficacy data, this talk will examine the rationale for vaccination, address common concerns, and highlight the benefits of maternal immunization for both the mother and the newborn through passive immunity.

A second discussion segment will integrate the perspectives of Dr. Gil and Prof. Nelson, fostering dialogue on the nuanced decisions facing families and clinicians. The session will conclude with an extended Q&A panel featuring all speakers, offering attendees the opportunity to engage directly with the experts on complex clinical scenarios and emerging evidence.

By bridging international best practices with local context, and bringing together obstetric, infectious disease, and paediatric expertise, this APCMFM E-zone session aims to equip maternal-fetal medicine practitioners, obstetricians, midwives, and allied healthcare professionals with the comprehensive knowledge and practical tools needed to navigate the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 in pregnancy and lactation.