Sporadic miscarriage

Coomarasamy, Arri; Gallos, Ioannis; Papadopoulou, Argyro; Dhillon-smith, Rima; Al-Memar, Maya; Brewin, Jane; Christiansen, Ole B; Stephenson, Mary D; Oladapo, Olufemi T.; Wijeyaratne, Chandrika N. ; Small, Rachel; Bennett, Phillip R ; Regan, Lesley; Goddijn, Mariëtte; Devall, Adam; Bourne, Tom; Brosens, Jan J; Quenby, Siobhan

DOI:

[10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00683-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00683-8)

License:

Creative Commons: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Coomarasamy, A, Gallos, I, Papadopoulou, A, Dhillon-smith, R, Al-Memar, M, Brewin, J, Christiansen, OB, Stephenson, MD, Oladapo, OT, Wijeyaratne, CN, Small, R, Bennett, PR, Regan, L, Goddijn, M, Devall, A, Bourne, T, Brosens, JJ & Quenby, S 2021, 'Sporadic miscarriage: evidence to provide effective care', *The Lancet*, vol. 397, no. 10285, pp. 1668-1674. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00683-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00683-8)

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

Sporadic miscarriage: evidence to provide effective care

Arri Coomarasamy, M.D.¹, Ioannis D Gallos, M.D.^{1*}, Argyro Papadopoulou, M.B., Ch.B.¹, Rima K Dhillon-Smith, Ph.D.¹, Maya Al-Memar, Ph.D.², Jane Brewin, B.Sc.³, Ole B Christiansen, Ph.D.⁴, Mary D Stephenson M.D.⁵, Olufemi T Oladapo, M.D.⁶, Chandrika N Wijeyaratne, M.D.⁷, Rachel Small, R.G.N.⁸, Phillip R Bennett, Ph.D.², Lesley Regan, M.D.², Mariëtte Goddijn, Ph.D.⁹, Adam J Devall, Ph.D.¹, Tom Bourne, Ph.D.^{2,10}, Jan J Brosens, Ph.D.^{11,12}, and Siobhan Quenby, M.D.^{11,12}

1. Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research, Institute of Metabolism and Systems Research, University of Birmingham, UK

2. Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research, Imperial College London, UK

3. Tommy's Charity, Laurence Pountney Hill, London, UK

4. Centre for Recurrent Pregnancy Loss of Western Denmark, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Aalborg University Hospital, Aalborg, Denmark

5. University of Illinois Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Program, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, USA

6. UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP), Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland

7. Department of Reproductive Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

8. Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham, UK

9. Center for Reproductive Medicine, Amsterdam UMC, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

10. KU Leuven, Department of Development and Regeneration, Leuven, Belgium

11. Division of Biomedical Sciences, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK

12. Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust, Coventry, UK

* Correspondence to: Dr Ioannis Gallos; Institute of Metabolism and Systems Research, College of Medical and Dental Sciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, UK

Email: i.d.gallos@bham.ac.uk

Tel: +44(121) 371 8202

Summary

The physical and psychological impact of miscarriage is commonly underappreciated. The journey from diagnosis of miscarriage, through clinical management, to supportive aftercare can be challenging for women, their partners and care-givers. Diagnostic challenges can lead to delayed or ineffective care and increased anxiety. Inaccurate diagnosis of a miscarriage can result in the unintended termination of a wanted pregnancy. Uncertainty about the therapeutic effects of interventions can lead to suboptimal care, with variations across facilities and countries.

We have developed recommendations for practice from a literature review, appraisal of guidelines and expert group discussions. The recommendations are grouped into three categories: diagnosis of miscarriage, prevention of miscarriage in women with early pregnancy bleeding and management of miscarriage.

We recommend that every country reports annual aggregate miscarriage data, similarly to the reporting of stillbirth. Early pregnancy services need to focus on providing an effective ultrasound service, as this is central to the diagnosis of miscarriage, and be able to provide expectant miscarriage management, medical management with mifepristone and misoprostol, and surgical management with manual vacuum aspiration. Women with the dual risk factors of early pregnancy bleeding and a history of previous miscarriage can be recommended vaginal micronized progesterone to improve the prospects of live birth. We urge health funders and providers to invest in early pregnancy care, with specific focus on training for clinical nurse specialists and doctors to deliver comprehensive miscarriage care within the setting of dedicated early pregnancy units.

Keywords: miscarriage, treatment, tests, literature review, models of care

Key messages*Miscarriage diagnosis*

Accurate diagnosis of miscarriage relies on high quality ultrasound scanning and use of validated diagnostic algorithms. An empty gestation sac with a mean sac diameter of ≥ 25 mm, or an embryo with a crown rump length of ≥ 7 mm with no visible heart activity on transvaginal ultrasonography, is considered to have sufficient accuracy for the diagnosis of miscarriage to justify miscarriage management.

Prevention of miscarriage in women with early pregnancy bleeding

There is high quality evidence that vaginal micronized progesterone increases live birth rates in women with early pregnancy bleeding and a history of miscarriage. There is a 5% absolute rate increase in live births with progesterone, when compared with placebo, in women with bleeding and one or more previous miscarriages (RR 1.09; 95% CI, 1.03-1.15), and a 15% absolute rate increase in live births in women with bleeding and three or more previous miscarriages (RR 1.28; 95% CI, 1.08 to 1.51).

Miscarriage management

Surgical management with vacuum suction aspiration after cervical preparation is ranked first amongst six competing strategies for completing a missed miscarriage. Amongst medical management strategies, a combination of mifepristone and misoprostol is more effective than misoprostol alone in completing a missed miscarriage. Expectant management is an effective approach for women with incomplete miscarriage. Women should be presented with the available evidence and be free to choose the miscarriage management approach that suits their needs and preferences.

Organisation and delivery of miscarriage care

Miscarriage care, delivered by clinical nurse specialists and medical staff specifically trained in early pregnancy care, can be organised and delivered within self-contained early pregnancy units (EPUs). EPUs are effective and cost-efficient.

54

55

56 Introduction

57 There are uncertainties about the best approaches to diagnose a miscarriage, prevent a miscarriage
58 in women with early pregnancy bleeding, manage women with a confirmed miscarriage, and
59 optimally organise and deliver emergency miscarriage care.

60 Pain and bleeding in early pregnancy are distressing to women. Women who experience these
61 symptoms are anxious about the fate of their pregnancy, and want to know the risk of a miscarriage
62 at that moment, and the availability of any treatment that can be offered to reduce their risk. A
63 miscarriage can also occur without any pain or bleeding. Such a loss, called a missed miscarriage, is
64 diagnosed by ultrasonography.¹

65 Healthcare providers strive to avoid diagnostic errors that may have serious consequences.^{2,3} A
66 falsely positive diagnosis of miscarriage can result in the unintentional termination of a viable and
67 wanted pregnancy. Concerns about inaccuracies in miscarriage diagnosis resulted in urgent revisions
68 to the UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommendations in 2012.⁴ In an
69 effort to tackle the diagnostic challenge, healthcare providers often resort to arranging repeated
70 visits and investigations for women. A clear diagnostic pathway can help reduce the anxiety to
71 women by reducing the period of uncertainty. It can also result in a more effective and cost-efficient
72 early pregnancy service.

73 There are uncertainties about the most effective and safe methods for managing a miscarriage. Each
74 method carries the potential for complications, such as unplanned surgery or blood transfusion.

75 Emergency miscarriage care may be provided by generalists or specialists, and be offered in
 76 emergency care departments or dedicated early pregnancy units (EPUs). There are uncertainties
 77 about the optimal ways to organise and deliver care.

78 To facilitate evidence-based care, we have developed recommendations for practice from a
 79 literature review, appraisal of existing guidelines, and expert group discussions. The
 80 recommendations are grouped into three categories: 1) diagnosis of miscarriage, 2) prevention of
 81 miscarriage in women with early pregnancy bleeding, and 3) clinical management of a confirmed
 82 miscarriage. We conclude with a proposal for organising and delivering emergency miscarriage care
 83 and a call to action for improved care and high quality research in specific areas.

84 **Box 1:** Methods for literature searches

The recommendations are based on a review of the current literature, appraisal of professional body guidelines and expert group discussions.

Literature reviews: We searched the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and MEDLINE (inception until 9 Jan 2020) for systematic reviews specifying or reporting any miscarriage outcome. Any review published before January 2019 was updated with a targeted literature search. Six reviews focussed on the prevention of miscarriage in women with bleeding⁵⁻¹⁰ and 12 on the management of miscarriage¹¹⁻²² We reported results for miscarriage and live birth separately.

Review of professional body guidelines: We reviewed the latest international guidance on the diagnosis, prevention and management of miscarriage, including the 2019 NICE guideline on the management of ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage,²³ the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) guideline on the management of recurrent pregnancy loss,²⁴ and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists guideline on early pregnancy loss.²⁵

Expert group meetings: The evidence from the reviews and guidelines was considered by an international group of experts, over the course of several meetings, to formulate the recommendations presented in this article. Agreements were reached through consensus.

85

86 **Diagnosis of miscarriage**

87 The risk of miscarriage varies by the presenting clinical symptoms and signs (Table 1). For example,
 88 the presence of a small amount of bleeding in early pregnancy is not associated with an increase in
 89 the risk of miscarriage, whilst heavy bleeding is associated with a substantial risk of miscarriage of
 90 28.8% (Table 1). However, the presence of nausea and vomiting, which can be marker of healthy
 91 levels of pregnancy hormones, is associated with a lower risk of miscarriage (9.7%) (Table 1). The
 92 probability of miscarriage with certain ultrasound features is so high that these findings can be
 93 considered to have sufficient accuracy to justify miscarriage management (Table 1). Serum
 94 progesterone concentrations can provide additional information on the viability of a pregnancy
 95 (Table 1).

96 Whilst risk prediction can provide helpful information, the diagnosis of miscarriage requires
 97 transvaginal ultrasonography. However, a systematic review found much variation in the ultrasound
 98 criteria used and there was significant uncertainty in the diagnostic accuracy, as shown by the large
 99 confidence intervals around sensitivity and specificity estimates.^{26,27} There was no uniform
 100 agreement over what criteria should be used to make a diagnosis of miscarriage.²⁶ For example, the
 101 American College of Radiology (ACR) considered the presence of an empty gestation sac with mean
 102 sac diameter (MSD) ≥ 16 mm or an embryo of crown-rump length (CRL) ≥ 5 mm with no heartbeat to
 103 be diagnostic of a miscarriage.²⁸ On the other hand, the Royal College of Obstetricians and
 104 Gynaecologists (RCOG) in the UK used cut-off values for MSD of ≥ 20 mm and a CRL of ≥ 6 mm.²⁹ The
 105 diagnostic uncertainties meant there was a risk of initiating treatment erroneously, resulting in the
 106 potential termination of a wanted pregnancy.

107

108 **Table 1.** Accuracy of symptoms, signs and test results for the diagnosis of miscarriage

	Number of participants (studies)	Sensitivity (%)	Specificity (%)	Likelihood ratio (95% CI)		Probability of miscarriage (95% CI)*	
				For positive result	For negative result	Positive test result	Negative test result
Symptoms and Signs							
Nausea and vomiting	9964 (9)	42.5	30.1	0.6	1.9	9.7 (9.0, 10.4)	25.2 (24.0, 26.6)
Bleeding (light)	4390 (1)	22.9	74.5	0.9	1.1	13.2 (11.4, 15.4)	15.6 (14.9, 16.3)
Bleeding (heavy)	3382 (1)	5.7	97.5	2.3	1.0	28.8 (20.4, 39.0)	14.6 (14.2, 14.9)
Bleeding (any)	11,936 (11)	43.2	83.1	2.6	0.7	31.1 (29.3, 33.0)	10.7 (10.1, 11.3)
Abdominal pain	341 (1)	27.4	69.5	0.9	1.0	13.7 (9.8, 18.8)	15.5 (13.7, 17.6)
Bleeding and abdominal pain	3679 (2)	20.4	96.6	6.0	0.8	51.3 (45.0, 57.5)	12.6 (12.2, 13.2)
Ultrasound markers							
Fetal size in the absence of heart activity							
CRL ≥5mm	659 (2)	22.8	96.8	7.1	0.8	55.6 (32.3, 76.8)	12.4 (11.0, 12.9)
CRL ≥6mm	659 (2)	11.0	99.2	13.7	0.9	70.7 (25.1, 94.5)	13.7 (13.3, 14.1)
CRL ≥7mm	659 (2)	3.6	100	∞	1.0	∞	14.5 (14.4, 14.7)
Gestational sac diameter in the absence of a fetal pole							
GSD ≥16mm	1193 (3)	27.1	96.7	8.2	0.8	59.1 (45.9, 71.0)	11.7 (11.3, 12.2)
GSD ≥20mm	1244 (3)	23.7	98.0	12.1	0.8	68.1 (51.5, 81.1)	12.1 (11.7, 12.5)
GSD ≥20mm + no yolk sac	281 (3)	32.2	100	∞	0.7	∞	10.7 (9.6, 12.0)
GSD ≥25mm	1497 (5)	14.3	100	∞	0.9	∞	13.2 (12.9, 13.4)
Biochemical markers							
Serum progesterone in women with pain or bleeding							
Progesterone <10 ng/mL	4689 (9)	66.5	96.3	18.0	0.4	76.1 (55.9, 88.8)	5.8 (4.2, 8.1)
Progesterone <15 ng/mL	5128 (9)	83.3	87.5	6.7	0.2	54.0 (40.2, 67.4)	3.1 (1.6, 6.6)
Progesterone <20 ng/mL	4348 (8)	85.7	66.6	2.6	0.2	31.1 (20.5, 44.3)	3.7 (1.7, 7.7)
Serum progesterone in women with pain or bleeding and inconclusive USS							
Progesterone <5 ng/mL	1998 (5)	74.6	98.4	45.4	0.3	88.9 (55.7, 98.1)	4.4 (2.1, 9.1)

CI: confidence interval; CRL: crown rump length; GSD: gestational sac diameter; * A pre-test probability of 15% for miscarriage has been assumed for this table. The post-test probabilities are dependent on the pre-test probabilities which are expected to vary amongst different populations of women.

The diagnostic inaccuracies would have been compounded by another source of error: inter-observer variation when measuring CRL and MSD. In practice this meant that if the MSD measured 20mm, it could have been 16 mm, depending on the sonographer.³⁰ New stricter diagnostic criteria were therefore developed to minimise the risk of a false positive diagnosis for miscarriage: an empty gestation sac with an MSD of ≥ 25 mm or an embryo with CRL ≥ 7 mm with no visible heart activity on transvaginal ultrasonography.

The new guidelines for the diagnosis of miscarriage come at a cost. The more stringent ultrasound criteria inevitably lead to a small increase in inconclusive scans and need for follow-up ultrasound assessments. This diagnostic uncertainty can be distressing for women.³¹ Strategies to predict those most at risk of being given a diagnosis of miscarriage at subsequent visits have been developed, but their clinical utility needs evaluation.³²⁻³⁴ It is hoped that by providing women with information on the likely outcome, levels of anxiety and distress whilst waiting for diagnostic certainty can be reduced and expectations addressed.³¹ Appropriate training for those carrying out ultrasound scans in early pregnancy is vital if errors are to be avoided. Furthermore, it is best practice for the ultrasound scan findings to be checked by a second operator before a final diagnosis is made.

Prevention of miscarriage in women with early pregnancy bleeding

First trimester vaginal bleeding is common, with reported prevalence ranging between 7 and 24%.³⁵⁻

³⁹ Bleeding in early pregnancy increases the risk of a miscarriage (Table 1). We found six systematic reviews reporting on four classes of interventions to prevent miscarriages in women with early pregnancy bleeding: progestogens, human chorionic gonadotropins, uterine relaxants and bed rest

134 (Table 2).

135

136 **Table 2.** Summary effect estimates of interventions to prevent miscarriage in women with early

137 pregnancy bleeding

Type of intervention	Miscarriage			Live birth		
	Number of participants (trials)	Risk ratio [95% CI]	Quality of evidence	Number of participants (trials)	Risk ratio [95% CI]	Quality of evidence
Progesterone						
Progestogen vs placebo or no treatment						
Women with early pregnancy bleeding	4749 (8)	0.80 [0.66, 0.97]	HIGH	4749 (8)	1.05 [1.01, 1.08]	HIGH
Progesterone administered vaginally	4345 (5)	0.89 [0.80, 1.00]	HIGH	4345 (5)	1.04 [1.00, 1.08]	HIGH
Progesterone administered orally	404 (3)	0.59 [0.40, 0.88]	LOW	404 (3)	1.16 [1.03, 1.30]	LOW
Women with early pregnancy bleeding and no previous miscarriages	2261 (2)	0.96 [0.81, 1.12]	HIGH	2261 (2)	0.99 [0.95, 1.04]	HIGH
Women with early pregnancy bleeding and at least 1 previous miscarriage	1829 (2)	0.84 [0.70, 1.00]	HIGH	1829 (2)	1.08 [1.02, 1.15]	HIGH
Women with early pregnancy bleeding and at least 3 previous miscarriages	285 (1)	0.63 [0.43, 0.92]	HIGH	285 (1)	1.25 [1.05, 1.48]	HIGH
hCG						
hCG vs placebo or bed rest						
Women with early pregnancy bleeding	303 (3)	0.66 [0.42, 1.05]	LOW	235 (2)	1.02 [0.92, 1.13]	LOW
Uterine muscle relaxants						
Uterine muscle relaxant drugs vs no treatment						
Women with early pregnancy bleeding	170 (1)	0.25 [0.12, 0.51]	LOW	-	-	-
Bed rest						
Bed rest vs no treatment						
Women with early pregnancy bleeding	64 (2)	1.54 [0.92, 2.58]	LOW	41 (1)	0.48 [0.20, 1.13]	LOW

138 CI: confidence interval; hCG: Human chorionic gonadotropin.

139

140 *Progestogens*141 The pivotal role of progesterone in the maintenance of a successful pregnancy is well established.⁴⁰

142 In view of this, progesterone supplementation has been investigated as a treatment to stop a

143 miscarriage in women with early pregnancy bleeding.⁴¹

144 Three systematic reviews, using different types, doses and regimens of progestogens in women with

145 early pregnancy bleeding, have reported on miscarriage and live birth outcomes. The totality of

146 evidence, including all types of progestogens, showed a reduction in miscarriage (RR 0.80; 95% CI

147 0.66 to 0.97) and an increase in live birth rate (RR 1.05; 95% CI 1.01 to 1.08). The two main types of

148 progestogens used in the trials were dydrogesterone, a synthetic oral progestogen, and micronized

149 vaginal progesterone, which has identical molecular structure to natural progesterone hormone.

150 Dydrogesterone was associated with an increase in live birth rate (RR 1.16, 95% CI 1.03 to 1.30).

151 However, the two studies of dydrogesterone that reported on live birth outcome were small and of

152 poor quality.^{42,43} Both were single centre, open-label studies without placebo control. One of the

153 studies did not randomise participants, but instead allocated patients to dydrogesterone on

154 Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays, and to no treatment on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.⁴²

155 The other trial was not only a single-centre, but also a single-author study, with very little description

156 of the trial methods, and thus its quality could not be fully assessed.⁴⁹ Thus the effectiveness

157 evidence from these trials is not reliable. Furthermore, as dydrogesterone is a synthetic drug that has

158 a molecular structure different to natural progesterone, there is a need to unequivocally

159 demonstrate short-term and long-term safety before its use can be considered in clinical practice.

160 There is evidence from a case-control study that dydrogesterone use may be associated with

161 congenital cardiac defects.⁴⁴

Vaginal micronized progesterone was associated with an increase in live birth or ongoing pregnancy rate (RR 1.04; 95% CI 1.00 to 1.08); the evidence was primarily from a large UK-wide high quality placebo-controlled trial, the PRISM Trial which contributed 4,038 (93%) participants to the total of 4,345 participants.⁴⁵ A pre-specified subgroup analysis in this large trial explored the effects of progesterone in women with the dual risk factors of early pregnancy bleeding and a history of one or more previous miscarriage(s), and found an increase in live birth rate with progesterone (RR 1.09, 95% CI 1.03-1.15; NNT 18).⁴⁶ A pooled analysis confirmed this subgroup effect (Table 2). There was no evidence of any safety concerns from the use of natural progesterone.^{45,47} A health economic analysis found progesterone in women with early pregnancy bleeding and one or more previous miscarriage had 'economic dominance', meaning it was more effective and less costly, compared with placebo.⁴⁸ Progesterone treatment can therefore be considered for women with early pregnancy bleeding and a history of one or more previous miscarriages.⁴⁶ Women should be presented with the available evidence to make an informed decision.⁴⁶ The recommended treatment regimen is vaginal progesterone, 400mg twice daily, started when a woman with a history of one or more previous miscarriages presents with vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy, and continued to 16 weeks of gestation.⁴⁶

Human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG)

A systematic review identified three small low quality trials on the effects of hCG in women with early pregnancy bleeding.⁵ There was no clear evidence of a reduction in miscarriage rate, and there was no evidence of an increase in live birth rate (Table 2). Current evidence, therefore, does not support the use of hCG in women with early pregnancy bleeding.

There is very limited evidence on the effects of uterine relaxants¹⁰ or bed rest,⁴⁹ but the available evidence does not support their use (Table 2).

186

187 **Management of miscarriage**

188 Miscarriage can be managed expectantly, medically with tablets, or surgically. Although historically
 189 women with miscarriage had a surgical procedure, there are now alternative options. Expectant
 190 management means waiting for natural expulsion of pregnancy tissue. Medical methods of
 191 management of miscarriage include various regimens of misoprostol, with or without mifepristone.
 192 Misoprostol is a synthetic prostaglandin E1 analogue that induces cervical softening and uterine
 193 contractions. Mifepristone acts as a competitive progesterone and glucocorticoid receptor
 194 antagonist that interferes with the nuclear receptor signalling of progesterone, blocking its actions
 195 and initiating the expulsion of the pregnancy. Surgical methods can involve dilatation of the cervix
 196 and curettage or suction aspiration of pregnancy tissue, with or without the preparation of the
 197 cervix with misoprostol to minimise the risk of injury from cervical dilation.

198 We have recently completed a Cochrane network meta-analysis evaluating six approaches for
 199 managing miscarriage.⁵⁰ The network meta-analysis included 70 trials with 15,830 participants
 200 (Figure 1). The trials included women in hospital settings with missed miscarriage (23 trials),
 201 incomplete miscarriage (13 trials), and both types of miscarriage (12 trials). Relative effects from the
 202 network meta-analysis of 56 trials (11,311 women) showed that all active interventions were more
 203 likely to result in the completion of miscarriage when compared with expectant management or
 204 placebo (Table 3). The most effective method for achieving the completion of a miscarriage was
 205 suction aspiration with cervical preparation compared with expectant management (RR 2.10, 95% CI
 206 1.44 to 3.06, *very low certainty evidence*). This was followed by dilatation and curettage (RR 1.45,
 207 95% CI 1.25 to 1.68, *low certainty evidence*), suction aspiration alone (RR 1.40, 95% CI 1.26 to 1.56,
 208 *low certainty evidence*), mifepristone plus misoprostol combination (RR 1.36, 95% CI 1.17 to 1.59,
 209 *moderate certainty evidence*) and misoprostol alone (RR 1.29, 95% CI 1.15 to 1.44, *low certainty*
 210 *evidence*).

Relative effects from the network meta-analysis of 32 trials (7,243 women) did not show important differences amongst the six approaches for the composite outcome of death or serious complications, such as uterine perforation, need for further life-saving procedures including hysterectomy, blood transfusion or intensive care unit admission. Follow-up of participants from a large trial of expectant, medical and surgical management showed that the method of miscarriage management did not affect subsequent pregnancy rates with approximately four in five women giving birth within five years of the index miscarriage.⁵¹

Our recommendation is that women should be presented with the available evidence and should be supported to choose the miscarriage management approach that suits their needs and preferences.

If a woman with a missed miscarriage chooses to have surgery, suction aspiration with cervical preparation should be recommended, but if she chooses to have the medical management, a combination therapy with mifepristone and misoprostol should be recommended. Women with incomplete miscarriage have over 90% chance of completing the miscarriage without medical intervention,⁵⁰ as the process of expelling pregnancy tissue has already started. Expectant management is therefore recommended as the first-line option for women with incomplete miscarriage, provided there is no evidence of excessive bleeding or intrauterine infection.

Figure 1. Network diagram of studies of miscarriage management for the outcome of completion of miscarriage.

The nodes represent an intervention and their size is proportional to the number of trials comparing this intervention to any other in the network. The lines connecting each pair of interventions represent a direct comparison and are drawn proportional to the number of trials making that direct comparison. Numbers on the lines represent the number of trials and participants for each comparison. The colour of the line is purple for high-certainty evidence (there were no high-certainty evidence); green for moderate-certainty evidence; orange for low-certainty evidence and red for very low-certainty evidence.

Table 3. Summary of findings of various miscarriage management approaches for the outcome of completion of miscarriage

Intervention versus expectant care or placebo	Direct Evidence		Indirect Evidence		Network Evidence		Anticipated absolute effects for NMA estimate		
	RR (95% CI)	Certainty	RR (95% CI)	Certainty	RR (95% CI)	Certainty	Risk with expectant care or placebo	Risk with intervention	Risk difference with intervention
Suction aspiration plus cervical preparation	Not reported by included studies	-	2·10 (1·44 to 3·06)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ VERY LOW ^a	2·10 (1·44 to 3·06)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ VERY LOW ^b	647 per 1,000	1,359 per 1,000	712 more per 1,000 (from 285 more to 1,333 more)
Suction aspiration	1·27 (1·08 to 1·48)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ MODERATE ^c	1·63 (1·37 to 1·94)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ MODERATE ^d	1·40 (1·26 to 1·56)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ LOW ^e	647 per 1,000	906 per 1,000	259 more per 1,000 (from 168 more to 362 more)
Dilation plus curettage	1·25 (1·12 to 1·39)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ MODERATE ^f	1·50 (1·27 to 1·78)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ LOW ^g	1·45 (1·25 to 1·68)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ LOW ^e	647 per 1,000	938 per 1,000	291 more per 1,000 (from 162 more to 440 more)

Mifepristone plus misoprostol	1.59 (1.01 to 2.51)	⊕⊕⊕⊖ MODERATE ^c	1.31 (1.08 to 1.60)	⊕⊕⊕⊖ MODERATE ^d	1.36 (1.17 to 1.59)	⊕⊕⊕⊖ MODERATE ^h	647 per 1,000	880 per 1,000	233 more per 1,000 (from 110 more to 382 more)
Misoprostol	1.72 (1.26 to 2.33)	⊕⊕⊕⊖ MODERATE ^c	1.16 (1.02 to 1.33)	⊕⊕⊕⊖ MODERATE ^d	1.29 (1.15 to 1.44)	⊕⊕⊖⊖ LOW ⁱ	647 per 1,000	835 per 1,000	188 more per 1,000 (from 97 more to 285 more)

CI: Confidence interval; RR: Risk ratio; NMA: Network Meta Analysis

GRADE Working Group grades of evidence

High certainty: Very confident that the true effect lies close to that of the estimate of the effect

Moderate certainty: Moderately confident in the effect estimate: The true effect is likely to be close to the estimate of the effect, but there is a possibility that it is substantially different

Low certainty: Confidence in the effect estimate is limited: The true effect may be substantially different from the estimate of the effect

Very low certainty: Very little confidence in the effect estimate: The true effect could be substantially different from the estimate of effect

241 *a* Indirect evidence downgraded -3 due to multiple crucial limitations in study design and substantial imprecision

242 *b* Network evidence downgraded -3 due to very low certainty indirect evidence

243 *c* Direct evidence downgraded -1 due to substantial unexplained statistical heterogeneity

244 *d* Indirect evidence downgraded -1 due to substantial unexplained statistical heterogeneity

245 *e* Network evidence downgraded -2 due to moderate certainty direct evidence and incoherence between direct
246 and indirect estimates

247 *f* Direct evidence downgraded -1 due to substantial imprecision

248 *g* Indirect evidence downgraded -2 to limitations in study design and substantial unexplained statistical
249 heterogeneity

250 *h* Network evidence downgraded -1 due to moderate certainty indirect evidence

251 *i* Network evidence downgraded -2 due to moderate certainty indirect evidence and incoherence between
252 direct and indirect estimates

253

254 *Antibiotic prophylaxis for surgical management of miscarriage*

255 Infection can be a serious consequence of surgical management of miscarriage, in particular in low-

256 and middle-income countries (LMICs).⁵² Pelvic infection can result in sepsis and death,⁵³ as well as

257 long-term consequences from pelvic scarring, including increased rates of ectopic pregnancy and

258 infertility.⁵⁴

259 A meta-analysis of antibiotic prophylaxis before surgical management of miscarriage found a

260 reduction in pelvic infection (RR 0.56, 95% CI 0.35 to 0.89).¹¹ Most of the data were from LMICs.^{11,52,55-}

261 ⁵⁷ The largest trial to contribute data to this analysis was also a high quality trial; it used oral

262 doxycycline 400 mg and oral metronidazole 400 mg two hours before surgery.⁵⁷ We recommend the

263 use of prophylactic antibiotics before miscarriage surgery, particularly in LMIC settings.

Organisation and delivery of emergency early pregnancy care

Emergency early pregnancy care is currently provided in a variety of settings including primary care, private offices, emergency departments, and dedicated early pregnancy units (EPUs). Early pregnancy units are emerging as a model of care in many countries. They are specialist departments that provide care for women with problems in early pregnancy, including miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy and hyperemesis gravidarum. They may be staffed by specialist nurses, midwives, sonographers, doctors and other healthcare professionals.

We carried out a literature review to evaluate the effectiveness, women's views and cost-effectiveness of the EPUs as a model of organisation of care. We found six observational studies reporting clinical outcomes from an EPU model of care compared with data from the same hospitals before the EPU service was introduced.⁵⁸⁻⁶² Three studies reporting health economic evidence were also identified.⁶¹⁻⁶³ Relative effects from the studies showed that the EPU model of care was more likely to result in lower number of hospital admissions (4 studies, 1,323 women; RR 0.48, 95% CI 0.37 to 0.61), lower number of re-admissions to hospital (3 studies, 4,950 women; RR 0.76, 95% CI 0.61 to 0.95) and lower rates of surgery (2 studies, 573 women; RR 0.35, 95% CI 0.17 to 0.71). Two studies estimated the annual savings from establishing an EPU service to be £109,440 in the UK setting⁶³ and Australian \$257,617 in the Australian setting.⁶² Another study estimated cost savings to be up to €657 per woman.⁶¹

A qualitative study in the UK found that women valued the care they received in EPUs, but observed that improvements were required to ensure that women and their partners receive a streamlined, informative, supportive and continuous package of care from the point of contact to being discharged from the EPU.⁶⁴ The evidence supporting the EPU model of care over other models of care is of very low certainty due to the observational nature of studies, but the observed effects for clinical outcomes are large. The health economic evidence suggests that the EPU model of care may be cost-effective, at least in high-income country settings. As an EPU model is associated with a

reduction in hospital admissions, re-admissions and need for surgery, health economic arguments are likely to be in favour of an EPU model in LMICs too.

Global perspectives

The availability and accessibility of services for miscarriage diagnosis and management varies greatly across the world. Emergency early pregnancy care is provided in over 200 dedicated EPUs in the UK.⁶³ Similar units have now been established in many countries, including the Netherlands, Canada, Ireland, and Australia.^{61,65-68} In the USA, the first EPU was established in Denver, Colorado in 2013.⁶⁸ The concept of a dedicated multi-professional service for women with early pregnancy complications is now spreading into LMICs, for example, Nigeria.⁶⁹

There are several key elements that are required to establish a successful EPU service. These include an availability of resources such as drugs and ultrasound machines, an ability to efficiently process blood tests such as hCG and progesterone, training of individuals to be confident and competent in early pregnancy ultrasound scanning, training in breaking bad news and provision of psychological support. These resources are limited in LMICs. For example, a survey among 232 gynaecologists in Nigeria published in 2014 found that only 24% had formal training in transvaginal ultrasound scanning and that over 90% felt that the lack of the capacity for transvaginal ultrasound scanning was the most important obstacle against achieving effective care for women with miscarriage.⁶⁹ There is particular scarcity in ultrasound provisions in rural areas in many low resource settings. In sub-Saharan Africa, 30% of women in urban settings receive an obstetric ultrasound, but in rural areas this falls to 6%.⁷⁰ In South Africa, the urban to rural gap is again demonstrated with 68% of women in urban areas receiving pregnancy ultrasound, and only 18% in rural areas.⁷⁰

There are a multitude of factors to consider when introducing ultrasound services in LMICs, including patient demographics, disease patterns, geographic factors, cultural beliefs, and availability of sonographer training and ultrasound machines. The availability of appropriately trained practitioners

and ultrasound machines remains a considerable barrier to service provision in many low resource settings.⁷¹ Potential solutions include competency-based training programs in ultrasonography,⁷² and the provision of innovative hand-held ultrasound machines.⁷³

Studies which explore miscarriage management in LMICs frequently have cross-over with abortion care and so some parallel lessons can be drawn. Medical treatment with misoprostol is commonly used to treat incomplete abortions and miscarriages. It is an effective, safe, acceptable and affordable method of miscarriage management; however, arrangements for appropriate clinical follow-up are necessary as there is a risk of incomplete expulsion of pregnancy tissue with this method.^{74,75} Manual vacuum aspiration (MVA) is effective and safe for early pregnancies and is recommended by the World Health Organization to replace dilatation and curettage where these are still practiced.⁷⁶ However, a strategic assessment of unsafe abortion in Malawi found MVA is used infrequently, with dilatation and curettage being used in preference.⁷⁷ Reasons suggested for this preference included a lack of MVA equipment, equipment being locked up to prevent its use in inducing abortions and a lack of trained healthcare practitioners. There is a need for improved training and provisions for MVA.

Couples affected by miscarriage in LMICs are often overlooked due to competing health priorities. Access to tests, scans and treatments, which often require specialised and expensive laboratory facilities are challenges faced by both caregivers and patients. We recommend investment to improve early pregnancy care in LMICs. This can be achieved through increased provision of necessary drugs and equipment, increased training in scanning and surgical procedures, and organisation of effective and efficient care through dedicated early pregnancy units. An awareness-raising programme to encourage women to recognise and seek healthcare for early pregnancy complications is also needed.

Discussion

Sporadic miscarriage is common. Accurate diagnosis of miscarriage is the cornerstone of an effective early pregnancy service, and relies on high quality ultrasonography. There is high-certainty evidence that vaginal micronized progesterone increases live birth rates in women with early pregnancy bleeding and a history of miscarriage. Women who have a miscarriage may choose to have expectant, medical or surgical management; surgical management with vacuum suction aspiration after cervical preparation is ranked first amongst six competing strategies for completing a miscarriage. Amongst medical management strategies, mifepristone and misoprostol combination is more effective than misoprostol alone in completing a miscarriage. Expectant management is an effective approach for women with incomplete miscarriage. Miscarriage care should ideally be delivered by clinical nurse specialists and doctors with specialist training in early pregnancy care, in the setting of early pregnancy units. EPU's appear to be effective and cost-effective.

We have used the best available evidence to draw our inferences and recommendations, updating existing reviews, where appropriate, to ensure the information in the series is up-to-date and evidence-based to the best extent possible. However, there are limitations in the evidence, both in terms of quantity and quality, and therefore we have relied on consensus amongst experts where this was necessary.

Most of the available evidence relates to high-income settings, although the vast majority of miscarriages are suffered by women in low-resource settings. There is an evidence gap on miscarriage prevalence, consequences and costs in LMICs that need to be addressed robustly with targeted research. We recommend that early pregnancy services document and report monthly tallies of miscarriages to a national registry, and then every country to report annual miscarriage data, similarly to the reporting of stillbirth. Such data will facilitate efficient organisation of care, better allocation of scarce resources, research and international comparisons.

An effective emergency pregnancy service needs to be able to support women with expectant management, and provide medical management with mifepristone and misoprostol, and surgical management with manual vacuum aspiration. Mifepristone, misoprostol and manual vacuum

aspiration kits are not readily available in many resource poor settings; it is a priority for healthcare funders and providers to make these essential supplies universally available.

Miscarriage causes devastation to large numbers of couples in every country; there is silence around miscarriage, silence from sufferers, healthcare providers, policymakers and funders. We urge all stakeholders to develop and deliver a comprehensive miscarriage care service, ideally organised in the setting of a dedicated early pregnancy unit. Urgent research is needed on methods to prevent and predict women at high risk of physical and psychological morbidity associated with miscarriage, and to screen for mental health issues after pregnancy loss.

Contributors

All authors participated in the design of the review, literature searches, and assisted with the writing a review of all sections and agreed to submit the manuscript. The manuscript represents the view of named authors only.

Declaration of interests

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Acknowledgements

The Tommy's Charity funds the Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research. JJB holds a Wellcome Trust Investigator Award (212233/Z/18/Z). The funders had no role in the writing of the article; or in the decision to submit the paper for publication.

388 References

- 389 1. Morin L, Cargill YM, Glanc P. Ultrasound Evaluation of First Trimester Complications of
390 Pregnancy. *J Obstet Gynaecol Can* 2016; **38**(10): 982-8.
- 391 2. Ledger WL, Turner MJ. Implementation of the findings of a national enquiry into the
392 misdiagnosis of miscarriage in the Republic of Ireland: impact on quality of clinical care. *Fertil Steril*
393 2016; **105**(2): 417-22.
- 394 3. Doubilet PM, Benson CB, Bourne T, et al. Diagnostic criteria for nonviable pregnancy early in
395 the first trimester. *N Engl J Med* 2013; **369**(15): 1443-51.
- 396 4. Chen JL, Yang JM, Huang YZ, Li Y. Clinical observation of lymphocyte active immunotherapy
397 in 380 patients with unexplained recurrent spontaneous abortion. *Int Immunopharmacol* 2016; **40**:
398 347-50.
- 399 5. Devaseelan P, Fogarty PP, Regan L. Human chorionic gonadotrophin for threatened
400 miscarriage. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2010; (5): Cd007422.
- 401 6. Carp H. A systematic review of dydrogesterone for the treatment of threatened miscarriage.
402 *Gynecol Endocrinol* 2012; **28**(12): 983-90.
- 403 7. Li L, Dou L, Leung PC, Wang CC. Chinese herbal medicines for threatened miscarriage.
404 *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2012; (5): Cd008510.
- 405 8. Lee HJ, Park TC, Kim JH, Norwitz E, Lee B. The Influence of Oral Dydrogesterone and Vaginal
406 Progesterone on Threatened Abortion: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Biomed Res Int*
407 2017; **2017**: 3616875.
- 408 9. Wahabi HA, Fayed AA, Esmaeil SA, Bahkali KH. Progestogen for treating threatened
409 miscarriage. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2018; **8**: Cd005943.
- 410 10. Lede R, Duley L. Uterine muscle relaxant drugs for threatened miscarriage. *Cochrane*
411 *Database Syst Rev* 2005; (3): Cd002857.
- 412 11. May W, Gulmezoglu AM, Ba-Thike K. Antibiotics for incomplete abortion. *Cochrane*
413 *Database Syst Rev* 2007; (4): Cd001779.
- 414 12. Wen J, Cai QY, Deng F, Li YP. Manual versus electric vacuum aspiration for first-trimester
415 abortion: a systematic review. *Bjog* 2008; **115**(1): 5-13.
- 416 13. Dodd JM, Crowther CA. Misoprostol for induction of labour to terminate pregnancy in the
417 second or third trimester for women with a fetal anomaly or after intrauterine fetal death. *Cochrane*
418 *Database Syst Rev* 2010; (4): Cd004901.
- 419 14. Tuncalp O, Gulmezoglu AM, Souza JP. Surgical procedures for evacuating incomplete
420 miscarriage. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2010; (9): Cd001993.
- 421 15. Nanda K, Lopez LM, Grimes DA, Peloggia A, Nanda G. Expectant care versus surgical
422 treatment for miscarriage. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2012; (3): Cd003518.
- 423 16. Webber K, Grivell RM. Cervical ripening before first trimester surgical evacuation for non-
424 viable pregnancy. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2015; (11): Cd009954.
- 425 17. Udoh A, Effa EE, Oduwale O, Okusanya BO, Okafo O. Antibiotics for treating septic abortion.
426 *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2016; **7**: Cd011528.
- 427 18. Wu HL, Marwah S, Wang P, Wang QM, Chen XW. Misoprostol for medical treatment of
428 missed abortion: a systematic review and network meta-analysis. *Sci Rep* 2017; **7**(1): 1664.
- 429 19. Kim C, Barnard S, Neilson JP, Hickey M, Vazquez JC, Dou L. Medical treatments for
430 incomplete miscarriage. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2017; **1**: Cd007223.
- 431 20. B HAW, Murugesu N, Tobias A, Zamora J, Khan KS. Management of first-trimester
432 miscarriage: a systematic review and network meta-analysis. *Hum Reprod Update* 2019; **25**(3): 362-
433 74.
- 434 21. Cleeve A, Fonhus MS, Lavelanet A. A systematic review of the effectiveness, safety, and
435 acceptability of medical management of intrauterine fetal death at 14-28 weeks of gestation. *Int J*
436 *Gynaecol Obstet* 2019; **147**(3): 301-12.
- 437 22. Lemmers M, Verschoor MA, Kim BV, et al. Medical treatment for early fetal death (less than
438 24 weeks). *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2019; **6**: Cd002253.

23. Di Renzo GC, Giardina I, Clerici G, Brillo E, Gerli S. Progesterone in normal and pathological pregnancy. *Horm* 2016; **27**(1): 35-48.
24. Bender Atik R, Christiansen OB, Elson J, et al. ESHRE guideline: recurrent pregnancy loss. *Hum Reprod Open* 2018; **2018**(2): hoy004.
25. ACOG Practice Bulletin No. 200: Early Pregnancy Loss. *Obstet Gynecol* 2018; **132**(5): e197-e207.
26. Jevé Y, Rana R, Bhide A, Thangaratinam S. Accuracy of first-trimester ultrasound in the diagnosis of early embryonic demise: a systematic review. *Ultrasound Obstet Gynecol* 2011; **38**(5): 489-96.
27. Schouwink MH, Fong BF, Mol BW, van der Veen F. Ultrasonographic criteria for non-viability of first trimester intra-uterine pregnancy. *Early Pregnancy* 2000; **4**(3): 203-13.
28. Lane BF, Wong-You-Cheong JJ, Javitt MC, et al. ACR appropriateness Criteria® first trimester bleeding. *Ultrasound Q* 2013; **29**(2): 91-6.
29. National Collaborating Centre for Women's and Children's H. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: Guidance. Ectopic Pregnancy and Miscarriage: Diagnosis and Initial Management in Early Pregnancy of Ectopic Pregnancy and Miscarriage. London: RcoNational Collaborating Centre for Women's and Children's Health.; 2012.
30. Pexsters A, Luts J, Van Schoubroeck D, et al. Clinical implications of intra- and interobserver reproducibility of transvaginal sonographic measurement of gestational sac and crown-rump length at 6-9 weeks' gestation. *Ultrasound Obstet Gynecol* 2011; **38**(5): 510-5.
31. Farren J, Jalmbrant M, Falconieri N, et al. Posttraumatic stress, anxiety and depression following miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy: a multicenter, prospective, cohort study. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2019.
32. Elson J, Jurkovic D. Biochemistry in diagnosis and management of abnormal early pregnancy. *Curr Opin Obstet Gynecol* 2004; **16**(4): 339-44.
33. Bottomley C, Bourne T. Diagnosing miscarriage. *Best Pract Res Clin Obstet Gynaecol* 2009; **23**(4): 463-77.
34. Guha S, Van Belle V, Bottomley C, et al. External validation of models and simple scoring systems to predict miscarriage in intrauterine pregnancies of uncertain viability. *Hum Reprod* 2013; **28**(11): 2905-11.
35. Batzofin JH, Fielding WL, Friedman EA. Effect of vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy on outcome. *Obstet Gynecol* 1984; **63**(4): 515-8.
36. Sipila P, Hartikainen-Sorri AL, Oja H, Von Wendt L. Perinatal outcome of pregnancies complicated by vaginal bleeding. *Br J Obstet Gynaecol* 1992; **99**(12): 959-63.
37. Axelsen SM, Henriksen TB, Hedegaard M, Secher NJ. Characteristics of vaginal bleeding during pregnancy. *Eur J Obstet Gynecol Reprod Biol* 1995; **63**(2): 131-4.
38. French JI, McGregor JA, Draper D, Parker R, McFee J. Gestational bleeding, bacterial vaginosis, and common reproductive tract infections: risk for preterm birth and benefit of treatment. *Obstet Gynecol* 1999; **93**(5 Pt 1): 715-24.
39. Yang J, Savitz DA, Dole N, et al. Predictors of vaginal bleeding during the first two trimesters of pregnancy. *Paediatr Perinat Epidemiol* 2005; **19**(4): 276-83.
40. Di Renzo GC, Giardina I, Clerici G, Mattei A, Alajmi AH, Gerli S. The role of progesterone in maternal and fetal medicine. *Gynecol Endocrinol* 2012; **28**(11): 925-32.
41. Palagiano A, Bulletti C, Pace MC, D DEZ, Cicinelli E, Izzo A. Effects of vaginal progesterone on pain and uterine contractility in patients with threatened abortion before twelve weeks of pregnancy. *Ann N Y Acad Sci* 2004; **1034**: 200-10.
42. El-Zibdeh MY, Yousef LT. Dydrogesterone support in threatened miscarriage. *Maturitas* 2009; **65 Suppl 1**: S43-6.
43. Pandian RU. Dydrogesterone in threatened miscarriage: a Malaysian experience. *Maturitas* 2009; **65 Suppl 1**: S47-50.

44. Zaqout M, Aslem E, Abuqamar M, Abughazza O, Panzer J, De Wolf D. The Impact of Oral Intake of Dydrogesterone on Fetal Heart Development During Early Pregnancy. *Pediatr Cardiol* 2015; **36**(7): 1483-8.
45. Coomarasamy A, Devall AJ, Cheed V, et al. A Randomized Trial of Progesterone in Women with Bleeding in Early Pregnancy. *N Engl J Med* 2019; **380**(19): 1815-24.
46. Coomarasamy A, Devall AJ, Brosens JJ, et al. Micronized vaginal progesterone to prevent miscarriage: a critical evaluation of randomized evidence. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2020; **S0002-9378(19)32762-0**.
47. Coomarasamy A, Williams H, Truchanowicz E, et al. A Randomized Trial of Progesterone in Women with Recurrent Miscarriages. *N Engl J Med* 2015; **373**(22): 2141-8.
48. Okeke Ogwulu CB, Goranitis I, Devall AJ, et al. The cost-effectiveness of progesterone in preventing miscarriages in women with early pregnancy bleeding: an economic evaluation based on the PRISM Trial. *Bjog* 2020.
49. Aleman A, Althabe F, Belizan J, Bergel E. Bed rest during pregnancy for preventing miscarriage. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2005; (2): Cd003576.
50. Gallos ID, Williams HM, Price MJ, et al. Methods for managing miscarriage: a network meta-analysis. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2017; (3).
51. Smith LF, Ewings PD, Quinlan C. Incidence of pregnancy after expectant, medical, or surgical management of spontaneous first trimester miscarriage: long term follow-up of miscarriage treatment (MIST) randomised controlled trial. *Bmj* 2009; **339**: b3827.
52. Seeras R. Evaluation of prophylactic use of tetracycline after evacuation in abortion in Harare Central Hospital. *East Afr Med J* 1989; **66**(9): 607-10.
53. Melese T, Habte D, Tsimba BM, et al. High Levels of Post-Abortion Complication in a Setting Where Abortion Service Is Not Legalized. *PLoS One* 2017; **12**(1): e0166287.
54. Cates W, Farley TM, Rowe PJ. Worldwide patterns of infertility: is Africa different? *Lancet* 1985; **2**(8455): 596-8.
55. Ramin KD, Ramin SM, Hemsell PG, et al. Prophylactic antibiotics for suction curettage in incomplete abortion. *Infect Dis Obstet Gynecol* 1995; **2**(5): 213-7.
56. Titapant V, Cherdchoogiat P. Effectiveness of cefoxitin on preventing endometritis after uterine curettage for spontaneous incomplete abortion: a randomized controlled trial study. *J Med Assoc Thai* 2012; **95**(11): 1372-7.
57. Lissauer D, Wilson A, Hewitt CA, et al. A Randomized Trial of Prophylactic Antibiotics for Miscarriage Surgery. *N Engl J Med* 2019; **380**(11): 1012-21.
58. Bignardi T, Burnet S, Alhamdan D, et al. Management of women referred to an acute gynecology unit: impact of an ultrasound-based model of care. *Ultrasound Obstet Gynecol* 2010; **35**(3): 344-8.
59. Brownlea S, Holdgate A, Thou ST, Davis GK. Impact of an early pregnancy problem service on patient care and Emergency Department presentations. *Aust N Z J Obstet Gynaecol* 2005; **45**(2): 108-11.
60. Tunde-Byass M, Cheung VYT. The value of the early pregnancy assessment clinic in the management of early pregnancy complications. *J Obstet Gynaecol Can* 2009; **31**(9): 841-4.
61. van den Berg MM, Goddijn M, Ankum WM, et al. Early pregnancy care over time: should we promote an early pregnancy assessment unit? *Reprod Biomed Online* 2015; **31**(2): 192-8.
62. Wendt K, Crilly J, May C, Bates K, Saxena R. An outcomes evaluation of an emergency department early pregnancy assessment service and early pregnancy assessment protocol. *Emerg Med J* 2014; **31**(e1): e50-4.
63. Bigrigg MA, Read MD. Management of women referred to early pregnancy assessment unit: care and cost effectiveness. *Bmj* 1991; **302**(6776): 577-9.
64. Volgsten H, Jansson C, Darj E, Stavreus-Evers A. Women's experiences of miscarriage related to diagnosis, duration, and type of treatment. *Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand* 2018; **97**(12): 1491-8.

65. Rhone SA, Hodgson ZG, Moshrefzadeh A, Maurer C. A Canadian urban early pregnancy assessment clinic: a review of the first year of operation. *J Obstet Gynaecol Can* 2012; **34**(3): 243-9.
66. O'Rourke D, Wood S. The early pregnancy assessment project: the effect of cooperative care in the emergency department for management of early pregnancy complications. *Aust N Z J Obstet Gynaecol* 2009; **49**(1): 110-4.
67. Akhter P, Padmanabhan A, Babiker W, Sayed A, Molelekwa V, Geary M. Introduction of an early pregnancy assessment unit: audit on the first 6 months of service. *Ir J Med Sci* 2007; **176**(1): 23-6.
68. Rovner P, Stickrath E, Alston M, Lund K. An Early Pregnancy Unit in the United States: An Effective Method for Evaluating First-Trimester Pregnancy Complications. *J Ultrasound Med* 2018; **37**(6): 1533-8.
69. Iyoke CA, Ugwu OG, Ezugwu FO, Onah HE, Agbata AT, Ajah LC. Current approaches for assessment and treatment of women with early miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy in Nigeria: a case for dedicated early pregnancy services. *Niger J Clin Pract* 2014; **17**(4): 419-24.
70. Kongnyuy EJ, van den Broek N. The use of ultrasonography in obstetrics in developing countries. *Trop Doct* 2007; **37**(2): 70-2.
71. Tomic V, Tomic J, Klaic DZ. Oral micronized progesterone combined with vaginal progesterone gel for luteal support. *Gynecol Endocrinol* 2011; **27**(12): 1010-3.
72. Coomarasamy A, Truchanowicz EG, Rai R. Does first trimester progesterone prophylaxis increase the live birth rate in women with unexplained recurrent miscarriages? *Bmj* 2011; **342**: d1914.
73. Sayasneh A, Preisler J, Smith A, et al. Do pocket-sized ultrasound machines have the potential to be used as a tool to triage patients in obstetrics and gynecology? *Ultrasound Obstet Gynecol* 2012; **40**(2): 145-50.
74. Kiemtore S, Zamane H, Kain DP, et al. Effects of an intervention initiated by a national society to improve postabortion care in rural facilities in Burkina Faso. *Int J Gynaecol Obstet* 2017; **136**(2): 215-9.
75. Cleeve A, Byamugisha J, Gemzell-Danielsson K, et al. Women's Acceptability of Misoprostol Treatment for Incomplete Abortion by Midwives and Physicians - Secondary Outcome Analysis from a Randomized Controlled Equivalence Trial at District Level in Uganda. *PLoS One* 2016; **11**(2): e0149172.
76. WHO Guidelines Approved by the Guidelines Review Committee. Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems. Geneva: World Health Organization
- Copyright © 2012, World Health Organization.; 2012.
77. Jackson E, Johnson BR, Gebreselassie H, Kangaude GD, Mhango C. A strategic assessment of unsafe abortion in Malawi. *Reprod Health Matters* 2011; **19**(37): 133-43.