INFORMATION SHEET:
Intrauterine Growth Restriction (IUGR)

Strengthening Foundations Professional Development Program

A fetus is considered to have IUGR when ultrasound fetal measurements, particularly the abdominal circumference, are below what is considered normal for that age. This is usually below the 5th or 10th centile.

A common cause is a problem with the placenta. The placenta carries oxygen and nutrients to the baby and if not functioning properly the baby does not thrive. Less commonly, a genetic defect interferes with the baby’s growth.

Maternal Risk Factors

- Chronic hypertension.
- Pre-eclampsia (a pregnancy condition with symptoms of high blood pressure, protein in the urine and swelling of the face, hands and feet).
- Kidney disease.
- Anaemia.
- Tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use.
- Malnourishment.

Possible Neonatal Complications or Risk Factors for the Baby

- Low birth weight.
- Difficulty coping with vaginal delivery.
- Decreased oxygen levels.
- Hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar).
- Low resistance to infection.
- Low Apgar scores (a test given after birth to evaluate the newborn's physical condition and determine the need for special medical care).
- Difficulty maintaining temperature after birth.
- Long term growth problems.

Management Actions

- Ultrasound for fetal wellbeing.
- Regular follow up.
- May require early delivery.
Sources
