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## **Managing Q fever during pregnancy: the benefits of long-term cotrimoxazole therapy.**

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**BACKGROUND:** Q fever is a zoonosis caused by *Coxiella burnetii*. During pregnancy, it may result in obstetric complications, such as spontaneous abortion, intrauterine growth retardation, intrauterine fetal death, and premature delivery. Pregnant women are exposed to the risk of chronic Q fever. **METHODS:** We included 53 pregnant women who received a diagnosis of Q fever. We compared the incidence of obstetric and maternal Q fever complications for women who received long-term cotrimoxazole treatment (n=16) with that for women who did not receive long-term cotrimoxazole treatment (n=37); long-term cotrimoxazole treatment was defined as oral administration of trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole during at least 5 weeks of pregnancy. **RESULTS:** Obstetric complications were observed in 81.1% of pregnant women who did not receive long-term cotrimoxazole therapy: 5 (13.5%) women experienced spontaneous abortions, 10 (27%) experienced intrauterine growth retardation, 10 (27%) experienced intrauterine fetal death, and 10 (27%) experienced premature delivery. Oligoamnios was observed in 4 patients (10.8%). Obstetric complications were found to occur significantly more often in patients infected during their first trimester of pregnancy than in those infected later (P=.032). The outcome of the pregnancy was found to depend on placental infection by *C. burnetii* (P=.013). Long-term cotrimoxazole treatment protected against maternal chronic Q fever (P=.001), placental infection (P=.038), and obstetric complications (P=.009), especially intrauterine fetal death (P=.018), which was found to be related to placental infection (P=.008). **CONCLUSIONS:** Q fever during pregnancy results in severe obstetric complications, including oligoamnios. Because of its ability to protect against placental infection, intrauterine fetal death, and maternal chronic Q fever, long-term cotrimoxazole treatment should be used to treat pregnant women with Q fever.

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