

COVID-19 among pregnant Chinese women: case series data on the safety of vaginal birth and breastfeeding

Sir,

We read with great interest the research article by Wu et al.¹ The authors assessed viral presence in different biosamples from neonates and women with COVID-19 infection at various stages of pregnancy. We want to thank and congratulate the authors of this study for the critical emerging evidence that they have provided. However, we are concerned about a certain aspect of this study.

A mini commentary on this article praised the authors highly for their explicit clarification that one of the infants included in this study had been reported upon previously.² Still, no other cases have been reported in any other articles. However, we believe that there may be more than one duplicate reporting of cases of COVID-19 in this article. There are several reasons for our skepticism.

First, we have found another article, entitled 'Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection during late pregnancy: a report of 18 patients from Wuhan, China', written by doctors at the same hospital.³ As we examined the details of these two studies thoroughly, we were very surprised to find that the periods of recruitment overlapped. At least one pregnant woman or neonate had identical characteristics (e.g. maternal age, gestational age at delivery, complications, delivery mode, indications for

cesarean section, clinical symptoms and birthweight).

Second, it is worth noting that the corresponding author of the two articles is the same person.

Third, we note that the two articles were supported by the same foundation (National Key Research and Development Program of China, grant no. 2018YFC1002804).

Several concerns about the duplicate reporting of cases of COVID-19 have been described elsewhere.⁴ Furthermore, the reporting of duplicates in different articles creates an inaccurate scientific record and may affect our understanding of the disease and its epidemiology. Thus, it is imperative for authors to identify whether any patients in any submitted manuscript have been reported in any previous submissions or publications.

Disclosure of interests

None declared. Completed disclosure of interests form available to view online as supporting information.

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article. ■

References

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Authors' reply re: Coronavirus disease 2019 among pregnant Chinese women: case series data on the safety of vaginal birth and breastfeeding

Sir,

We thank Jianghui Cai, Mi Tang and Gen Li for their comments on our study 'Coronavirus disease 2019 among pregnant Chinese women: case series data on the safety of vaginal birth and breastfeeding'.¹

Our study was a collaboration between teams from Shanghai Jiao Tong University and a Wuhan team when Wuhan was at the most serious phase of this epidemic and little was known about coronavirus