A Universal Transvaginal Cervical Length Screening Program for Preterm Birth Prevention

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1. What is the current recommendation from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) regarding universal transvaginal cervical length screening in low-risk pregnant women? State any similarities or differences between ACOG’s recommendations and those from the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM).

2. State the current policy regarding routine cervical length screening at your institution and identify any similarities or differences between your protocol and that used by the authors. Is routine cervical length screening indicated in specific sub-groups of pregnant women?

3. State the research hypothesis examined by the study and identify the study design. Is this the optimal design to test the study’s hypothesis? Why or why not?

4. Identify the primary outcome(s) and key secondary outcomes of the study. Discuss whether or not you agree with the chosen primary outcome. Why do you think the primary outcome was chosen? Identify any other important outcomes of interest not examined in this study.

5. Briefly describe the authors’ technique for cervical length measurement and discuss whether it is reproducible. Why is reproducibility important for a screening program?

6. Briefly describe the cervical length screening protocol (or algorithm) used by the authors. Discuss whether or not this protocol is consistent with a) ACOG recommendations and b) SMFM recommendations.

7. What proportion of patients was not offered transvaginal cervical length screening? What is the potential effect on the study findings?

8. List and discuss any study limitations not identified by the authors.

9. List and describe at least 7 important criteria to consider when instituting a screening program. Does routine cervical length screening of low-risk pregnant women fulfill the criteria for a good screening program?