

**IMPACT OF UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE ON PRETERM BIRTH**

*A Dissertation Submitted to*

**THE TAMILNADU DR.M.G.R MEDICAL UNIVERSITY, CHENNAI**

With Partial Fulfillment of the Regulations for the award of the degree of

**MASTER OF SURGERY**

**BRANCH-II (OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGY)**

**REG NO:221916069**



**GOVERNMENT STANLEY MEDICAL COLLEGE**

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**MAY - 2022**

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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **IMPACT OF UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE ON PRETERM BIRTH** is a bonafide work done by **Dr. R.THILAGA** at R.S.R.M Lying in Hospital , Stanley Medical College, Chennai-1. This dissertation is submitted to Tamil Nadu Dr.M.G.R Medical University in partial fulfilment of university rules and regulations for the award of M.S Degree in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to **Dr.P.BALAJI MS,FRCS,FCLS,PHD**, Dean, Govt.Stanley Medical college and Govt. R.S.R.M Lying in Hospital,Chennai-1 for granting me permission to undertake this study.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Professor and Head of the Department, **Dr.V.RAJALAKSHMI MD DGO** Govt. R.S.R.M Lying in hospital who not only gave me the opportunity and necessary facilities to carry out this work but also gave me encouragement and invaluable guidance to complete the task I had undertaken.

I am extremely grateful to all our Professors, Assistant Professors, for their advice and support during this study.

I sincerely thank my fellow postgraduates and friends for their support and cooperation.

I owe a great many thanks to all my patients without whom this study would not have been possible.

I am very thankful to my parents for their continuous support and care.

Finally I thank Lord Almighty, who gave me the will power and showered blessings to complete my dissertation work.

## **PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATE**

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 Analysis address: thilagadoctor.mqmut4analysis.arkuna.com

## Sources included in the report

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 Document Preterm labour and magnesium level.docx [IDI2 33964681]  
 Submitted by: dr.aruna.rajenoran@gmail.com  
 Follower: dr.arun a.rajendran.mqmut4analysis.arkund.com
- SA** Document Iniro.pdf [ID60598590a]
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- W** URL: <https://www.infra.ie/definition-of-premature-birth/> **1**  
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- W** UPL: [https://ebwhj.journals.ekb.eg/article\\_J94745\\_2b9a5c3tbb40c8f5f2t6B40d4a5a2455.pdf](https://ebwhj.journals.ekb.eg/article_J94745_2b9a5c3tbb40c8f5f2t6B40d4a5a2455.pdf) **5**  
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## INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is one of the most cherished events in women's life. Any complication affecting fetal prognosis may leave adverse impact on mother. Preterm birth (PTB) is the leading cause of perinatal morbidity and mortality worldwide.

**Preterm birth** is defined as birth between the age of fetal viability and 37 completed weeks of gestation.<sup>1</sup>In the United Kingdom, PTB includes deliveries between 24<sup>+0</sup> and 36<sup>+6</sup> weeks gestation. In many developed and developing countries all births in which the birth weight is  $\geq 500\text{gm}$  are included in the PTB statistics. Globally, an estimated 15 million babies are born prematurely each year, representing 11.1% of all live births. One million of them die from the complications of PTB<sup>2</sup>. Infants who survive PTB make up most of the cases of serious morbidity and mortality in infants younger than 5 years of age<sup>3</sup>.

Recent advances in neonatology have resulted in increased survival rates, particularly amongst extremely premature infants, but this has also been associated with an increased morbidity. Preterm babies are at increased risk of neurological impairments, respiratory and gastrointestinal complications, sepsis etc<sup>4</sup>. Approximately, 40-50% of preterm birth are idiopathic, 30% due to PPROM, 15-20% are due to medical reasons.

**Prediction** of Preterm labour is one of the most important tasks faced by the clinicians .Many studies have been conducted to found a suitable predictive factor for preterm labour , for its early prediction and appropriate treatment.

Various **etioloical factors** for preterm birth include low BMI , Caucasion , Mullerian anomalies, smoking ,maternal age<18yrs or >35 years ,previous cervical dilatations, occupational, genetic factors ,periodontal disease and infections .Infections contributes 25-35% causes of PTB.<sup>567</sup>

Cervical tissue composed of matrix of collagen fibres and it is supported by the cardinal ligaments and uterosacral ligaments.<sup>8,9,10</sup>The cervix exerts the pressure from surrounding pelvic organs and withstands forces from pregnant uterus. A combination of both physiological pressures and individual anatomy affect the internal os and cervical function.<sup>8,9</sup>

**Radiological measures** like Cervical length and uterocervical angle has been studied as predictive factor for preterm birth .Both USG and digital examination of the cervix show that short cervix is a risk factor for preterm delivery .Asymptomatic women , at 24 weeks of GA ,a cervical length of less than 25 mm signifies increased risk of PTB. The shorter the cervix, the greater the risk.

Our study deals with IMPACT OF UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE ON PRETERM BIRTH.

Uterocervical angle(UCA) is a simple technique that can be measured on a mid-sagittal transvaginal cervical image. It is the triangular segment measured between the cervical canal and uterine segment, yielding a measurable angle. This concept of UCA had been already utilized as early as 1950's, by vaginal pessary. Pessary was thought to create an immunological barrier and mechanically change the inclination of the cervical canal, thereby distributing pelvic force away from cervix. The concept behind this is based on the mechanical properties of this angle, which seems to act as protective barrier when it is acute. An **Acute or when the angle is narrow**, UCA supports an anatomical geometry that would exert less force on the internal os, which is **protective** from deformation. An **Obtuse or wide**, UCA lends to direct, **linear outlet of uterine contents** onto the cervix. Altered uterocervical angle to a more acute, or narrowed angle, after vaginal pessary placement has been confirmed by MRI.<sup>8-1</sup>

Previously it has also been studied by *Rane et al* in 2004 for the prediction of labour outcome. **Keepanasseril et al** suggested that UCA may be mechanical barrier that might influence the progress of labour. **Sochacki-Wojcicka et al** in 2015, suggested that angle between the uterus and cervix may be related to gestational age at delivery and this angle measurement during pregnancy can be used for the prediction of spontaneous preterm labour.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **AIMS**

To study the impact of uterocervical angle on preterm birth.

### **OBJECTIVES**

To study the impact of uterocervical angle by transvaginal ultrasonography on preterm birth.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Preterm labour leading to preterm birth (PTB) is a major clinical problem, especially in developing countries that have limited resources to handle the problems of the premature neonate. More than 60% of preterm births occur in Africa and south Asia, but preterm birth is a global problem. It is the leading direct cause of neonatal death worldwide and the second most common cause of death for children under the age of 5, after pneumonia. An estimated 15 million babies are born preterm every year. This is more than 1 in 10 babies<sup>16</sup> In the lower economic countries, an average, 12% of babies are born preterm as compared with 9 in higher economic countries. Spontaneous preterm birth is the cause of around half of the preterm births, for which there was no effective preventive measures.

### **PRETERM LABOUR;**

Preterm labour is defined by ACOG (2016) as regular uterine contractions accompanied by a change in cervical dilatation, effacement, or both, or initial presentation with regular uterine contractions and at least 2cm cervical dilatation<sup>17</sup>

### **PRETERM BIRTH;**

Preterm birth is defined by ACOG (2016) as a birth occurring between 20 0/7 weeks of gestation and 36 6/7 weeks of gestation<sup>17</sup> According to WHO (2018), Preterm birth is defined as babies born alive before 27 completed weeks of gestation or fewer than 259 days of gestation since the first day of a woman's last menstrual period (LMP).

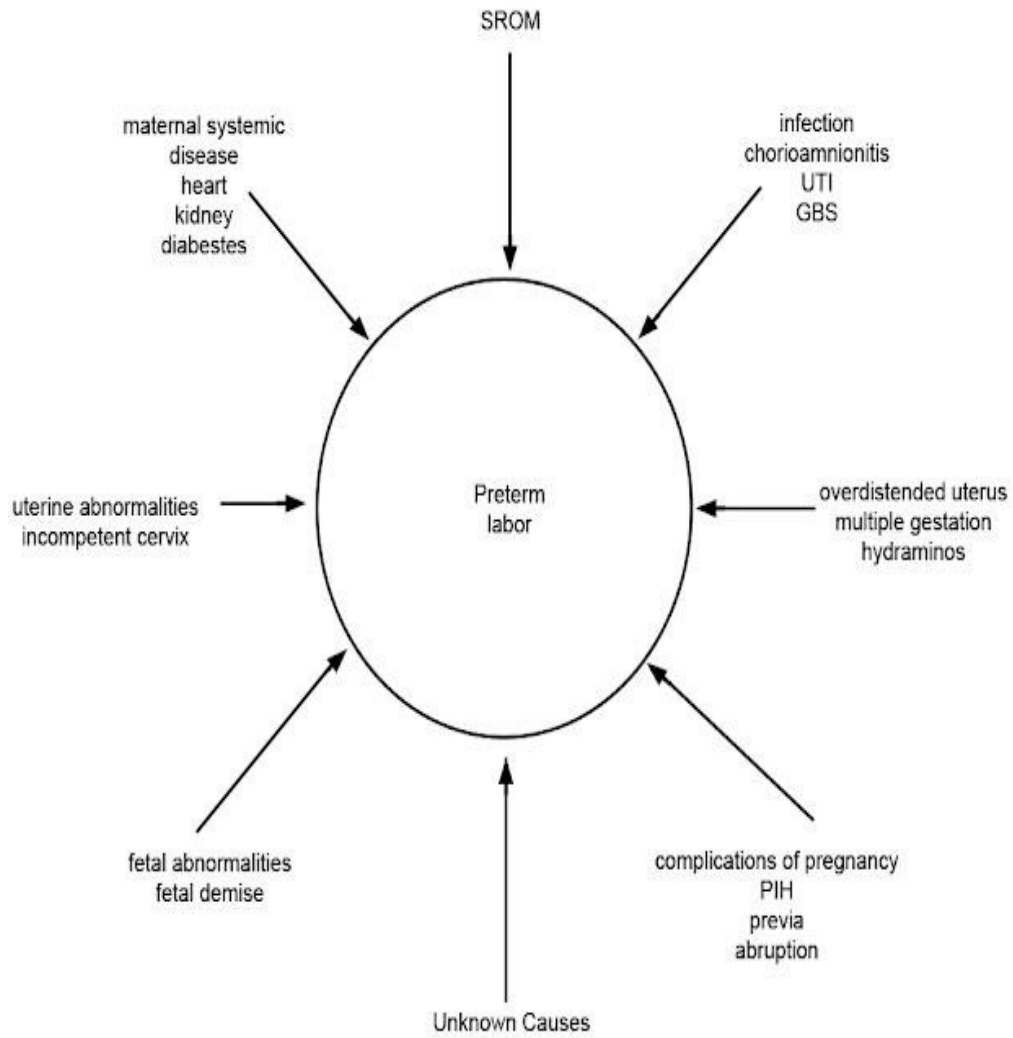
## CATEGORIZATION OF PRETERM BIRTH

- **By gestational age at birth**
  - Extremely preterm:<28 weeks
  - Very Preterm:28-31 weeks
  - Moderate-to-late preterm:32 to <36<sup>+6weeks</sup>
  
- **By birth weight**
  - Low birth weight(LBW):2500g
  - Very low birth weight(VLBW):<1500g
  - Extremely low birth weight(ELBW):<1000g

Identification of risk factors in women with improved care before, between and during pregnancies; better access to contraceptives and increased empowerment and education can decrease the preterm birth rate. Successful PTB prevention requires a multifaceted approach, combining public health and educational programs, lifestyle modification, access to optimization of obstetric healthcare, effective prediction and diagnostic modalities and the application of effective targeted interventions.

Over the past few decades, the perinatal outcomes of preterm neonates have markedly improved by advances in neonatal care, whereas rate of spontaneous PTB remain static. However, research into casual pathways and new diagnostic and treatment modalities is now been successful and many initiatives are begin to impact upon spontaneous preterm birth rates. Current prenatal screening protocols during the first and second trimester ,identify only approximately 55-70% of cases of spontaneous PTB, respectively

## PRETERM LABOR



## PATHOPHYSIOLOGY OF PRETERM LABOUR

## MECHANISM OF PRETERM LABOUR

CAUSES	MECHANISM
<p>stress Premature activation of physiological factors</p>	<p>Activation of maternal and fetal HPA-Axis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-CRH leads to secretion of fetal androgens</li> <li>-Placental estrogen and progesterone</li> <li>-secretion of prostaglandins leads to contractions, cervical change, PPROM</li> </ul>
<p>Inflammation and infection</p> <p>Mainly due to mycoplasma hominis and Ureaplasma Urealyticum</p> <p>It may also associated with chlamydia trichomatis, bacterial vaginosis, Niesseria gonorrhea, Trichiomonias, group B streptococcal infection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pro-inflammatory cytokines</li> <li>-Fetal inflammatory response syndrome</li> </ul>
<p>Ischemia and decidual hemorrhage</p>	<p>Thrombin activation</p>
<p>Pathological uterine distension</p>	<p>Increased gap junction along with contraction associated proteins and upregulation of prostaglandins and oxytocin receptors</p>



**RISK FACTORS**

<b>MATERNAL</b>	<b>FETAL</b>
<p>Prior preterm labour                      -strongest predictor                      -increased twofold risk if there is prior SPB&lt;34wks</p> <p>Prior miscarriage                      Prior induced abortion                      Overdistended uterus                      Fibroid uterus                      placenta previa ,abruption                      PROM and PPROM                      Cervical factors                      -short cervix                      -previous cervical surgery                      Medical condition Severe preeclampsia                      GDM                      APLA                      Sepsis                      Genetic causes                      Antepartum hemorrhage                      Pregnancy following ART</p>	<p>Multi fetal gestation</p> <p>Intrauterine growth restriction</p> <p>Congenital anomaly of fetus</p> <p>Intra uterine demise</p>

## **EPIDEMIOLOGY AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS**

### **Race**

Common among black women.

### **Age**

More Common in women under 20 and over 35.

### **Weight**

Poor nutrition, low weight gain and low pre pregnancy weight

### **Stature**

Short stature are more prone to produce preterm birth.

### **Socio Economic Status**

Lower Socio economic status Poor knowledge

Poor access to medical care

Poor general and personal hygiene more prone for pre term labour.

### **Addictions**

Cigarettes smoking, cocaine, alcohol consumption

### **Occupation:**

Women who undergoing strenuous exercise are prone to preterm labour

## **Contributing Factors**

Threatened abortion

Birth defects

Inter-pregnancy interval

Coitus history

Stress

Previous abortion and previous preterm delivery

Periodontal disease Genetic factors

## **DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR PRETERM LABOUR:**

- 1. Symptoms**
- 2. Pelvic examinations**
- 3. Ultrasonogram assessment**
- 4. Tococardiography**
- 5. Fetal fibronectin Threatened preterm labour:**

- Irregular or regular uterine activity

- Associated with

-cervical dilatation 1-2 cm

-cervical length by TVUS >20mm

### **Preterm labour:**

- Regular uterine activity

-Contraction frequency of

≥4 every 20 minutes or

≥8 in 60minutes

-Associated with

- Cervical dilation of  $\geq 3$ cm or
- Cervical length  $< 20$ mm on TVUS
- “show” or rupture of membranes

## ULTRASOUND EXAMINATION:

Trans-vaginal ultrasound examination is performed to measure cervical length. It is reproducible, dependable, and a very sensitive approach to measuring **cervical length**.

The concept of an ultrasonic measurement of the **UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE(UCA)** can be additional predictor of PTB.

### Other ultrasound signs of preterm labour:

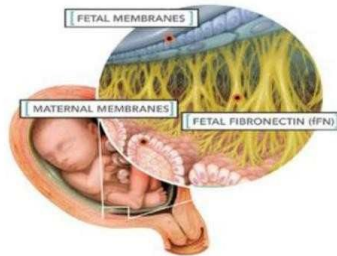
- Funneling: Protrusion of amniotic membrane into the cervical canal
- Debris/sludge(hyper-echoic matter in the amniotic fluid close to the internal cervical os)



*Figure 1 short cervix with funneling*

## MEASUREMENT OF FETAL FIBRONECTIN:

### [ Fetal Fibronectin



- fFn present in cervix secretions <22 wks, >34 wks
- Used for assessment of potential PTB
- Positive result (>50 ng/dl) may be indicative of PROM and represents disruption of decidua chorionic interface

In PPROM, Sensitivity-98.2%, Specificity-26.8%.

Fetal fibronectin done after 22 weeks of gestational age

When cervical length between 20 and 30mm

Intact membranes

No gross vaginal bleeding

-(fetal fibronectin) positive  $\geq 50$  ng/ml

Increased risk of preterm birth in the next 7 days

-(fetal fibronectin) negative

Low risk of preterm birth

However testing of fetal fibronectin for the diagnosis of true preterm labor is expensive and not done routinely in India.

## Prevention of Preterm labour

### Primary Prevention

Delay childbearing until age 17 years

Maintain interpregnancy interval

Eliminate low maternal weight for height

prevention and cessation of smoking

Detection and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases,

Detect bacteriuria and treat to cure

Manage fertility to avoid multifetal gestation

Pre-conceptual counselling

Early Detection and treatment of iron-deficiency anaemia

Drug abuse prevention and treatment



## **Secondary Prevention**

- ✓ Risk assessment in prenatal care
  
- ✓ Education regarding warning signs and symptoms of preterm labour
  
- ✓ Early-diagnosis programs
  
- ✓ Monitoring regarding cervical length, oncofetal fibronectin
  
- ✓ Early medical intervention
  
- ✓ Medications, surgery, early referral
  
- ✓ Reduced maternal physical activity
  
- ✓ Maternal work leave
  
- ✓ Eliminate barriers to care (access)

## **INTERVENTION WITH PROVEN BENEFIT:**

- Corticosteroids for fetal lung maturity
- Tocolysis to delay delivery for 48hrs

-facilitates in utero transfer to tertiary center

-provides time for corticosteroids and magnesium sulfate to act

- Magnesium sulfate for fetal neuroprotection

-between 28-32 weeks

- Cervical encerclage
- Progesterone supplementaion

**INTERVENTION WITH NO PROVEN BENEFITS:**

- Complete bed rest
  - Hydration
  - Maintenance therapy with tocolysis
  - Antibiotics-to prolong gestation
- to decrease neonatal morbidity

## **CORTICOSTEROIDS :**

### **REQUISITES FOR ANTENATAL STEROIDS:**

- Preterm birth considered Imminent
  - within 7 days of starting treatment
- Preterm birth imminent in women with
  - hypertensive disorders
  - pregestational and gestational diabetes
  - growth-restricted fetus
- Singleton or multiple gestation
- Membranes intact or ruptured
- No clinical evidence of maternal infection

## **ADMINISTRATION OF ANTENATAL CORTICOSTEROIDS:**

- **BETAMETHASONE-12 mg INTRAMUSCULAR 24 hours apart-two doses**
- **DEXAMETHASONE-6mg INTRAMUSCULAR 12 hours apart-4 doses**

- ✓ Accelerates fetal lung maturity
- ✓ Given between 24 and 36 weeks
- ✓ Effective for 7 days
- ✓ Rescue or repeat course in women

-<34 weeks gestation

-still at risk of preterm delivery in next 7 days

-prior course of antenatal corticosteroids administered >14 days earlier

## **MAGNESIUM SULPHATE FOR NEUROPROTECTION:**

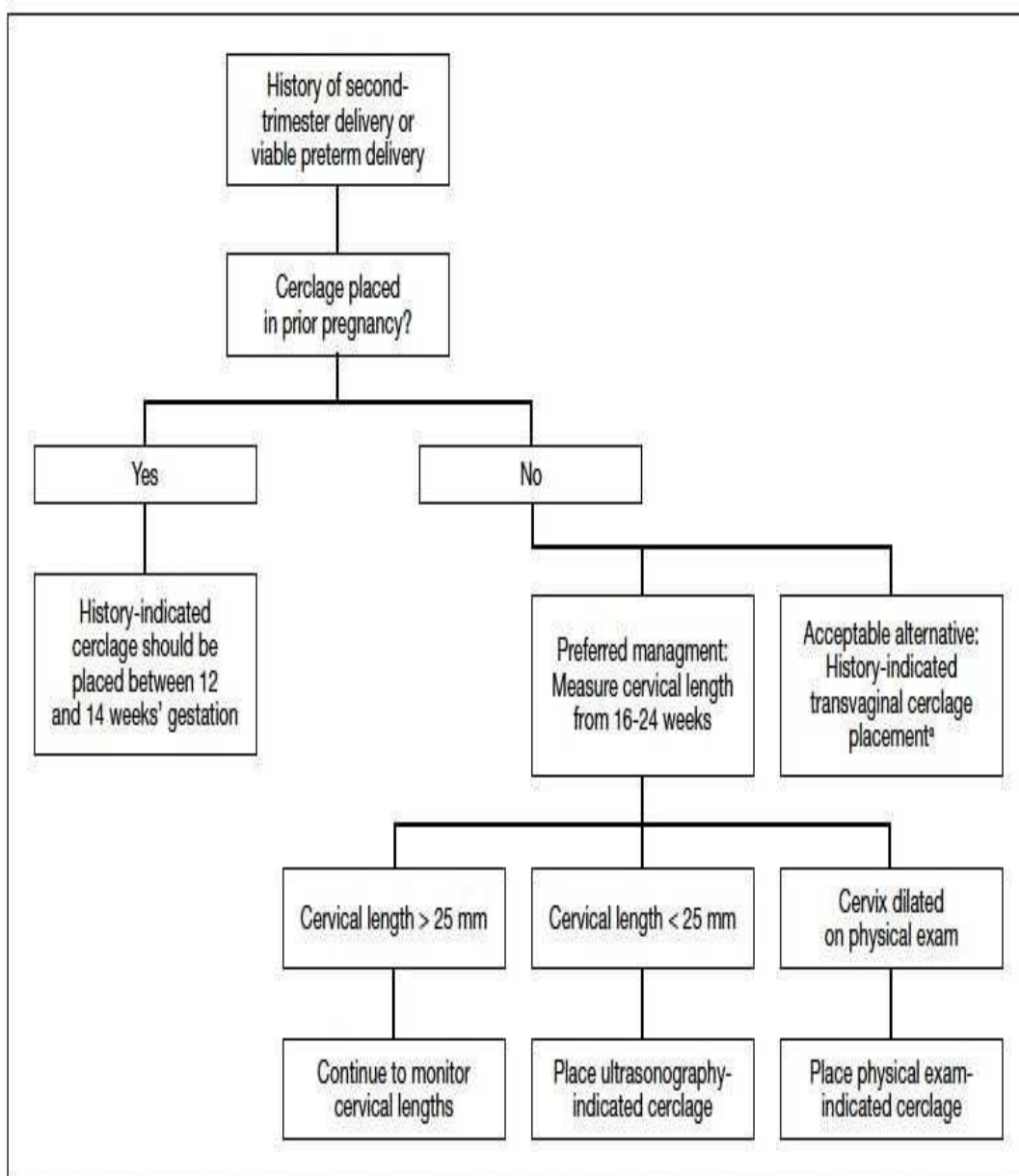
### INDICATIONS:

- Singletons or twins
- At 24 through 31<sup>+6</sup> weeks of gestation
- Women at high risk for delivery because of
  - preterm prelabor rupture of membrane
  - advanced preterm labor
- Anticipated elective preterm delivery within 2-24 hrs because of
  - fetal indication(fetal growth restriction)
  - maternal indication(uncontrolled hypertension)

DOSE:

- 4 gm iv loading dose over 20 minutes
- Followed by maintenance dose 1gm/hr with infusion pump
- Stopped as soon as delivery
- Given for maximum of 24 hours

**FIGURE 1** Decision tree for placement of transvaginal cerclage<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, history-indicated transvaginal cerclage can be placed in the case of a history of 1 or more second-trimester pregnancy losses related to painless cervical dilation even if no cerclage was placed in a prior pregnancy; however, more recently, tracking cervical length has become preferred management as it avoids unnecessary cerclage in one-half of patients.<sup>1</sup>



**TOCOLYSIS:**

To suppress uterine contractions to prevent preterm labour.

**CRITERIA:**

Gestational age between 28-36 weeks Intact membranes

Dilatation of cervix Alive fetus

Uterine contraction associated with cervical changes

**CONTRAINDICATION:**

Intrauterine fetal demise Lethal fetal anomaly

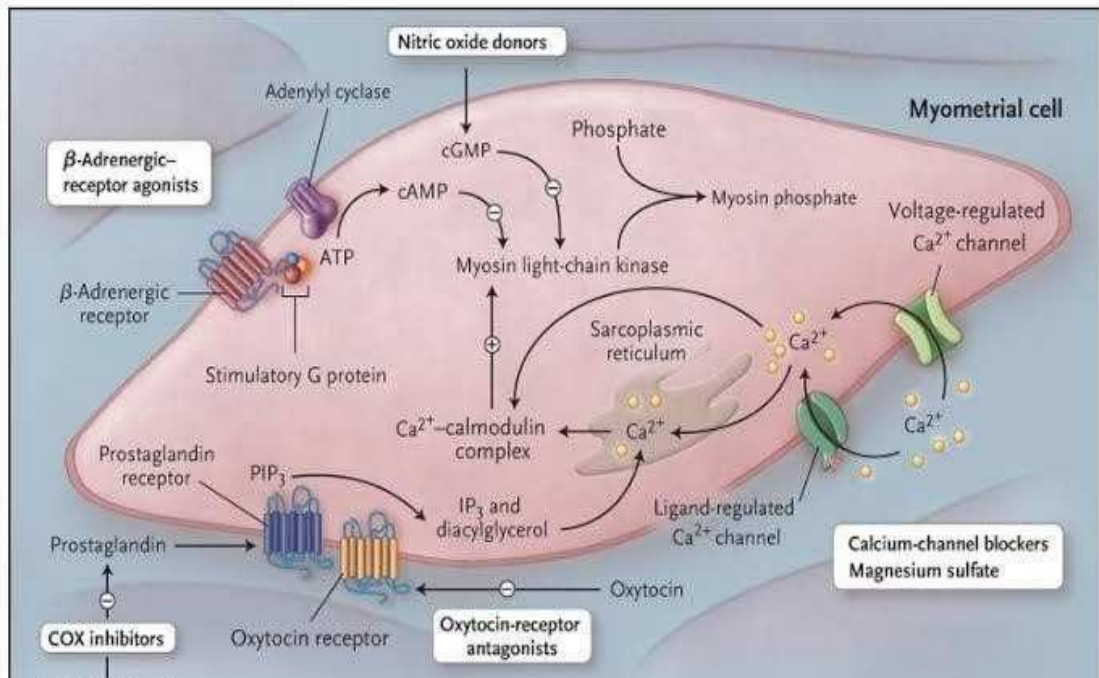
Non-reassuring fetal stress Severe preeclampsia or eclampsia

Maternal bleeding with hemodynamic instability Chorioamnionitis

Preterm premature rupture of membrane

Maternal contraindications of tocolysis(agent specific)

## Mechanism of action of the Tocolysis:



Medication or Drug Class	Dosage	Description	Rationale
Nifedipine	30 mg loading dose, 10–30 mg q 4–6 hr	Calcium channel blocker; tocolytic	Inhibits contraction of smooth muscles by reducing intracellular calcium influx
Indomethacin	100 mg PR, then mg PO every 6 hr for 8 doses	Prostaglandin synthetase inhibitor; tocolytic (labor repressant)	Reduces prostaglandin synthesis and decreases inflammation
Magnesium sulfate (contraindicated in myasthenia gravis)	4–6 g IV loading dose, 1–4 g/hr of IV maintenance	Central nervous system depressant; tocolytic	Decreases contraction of smooth muscles by reducing intracellular calcium influx; some controversy about its effectiveness
Terbutaline (Brethine)	Initially, 2.5 mcg/min; increase to a max of 20 mcg/min OR 0.25 mg SQ q 20 min × 3 doses, then q 3 hr; after IV is discontinued, follow with 5 mg PO q 4–6 hr	Beta-adrenergic	Relaxes smooth muscle, inhibiting uterine contractions; use has been curtailed due to side effects such as palpitations, tachycardia, and transient hyperglycemia, hypokalemia, and myocardial ischemia in the mother and fetus
Betamethasone (Celestone)	12 mg IM q 24 hr × 2	Glucocorticoid	Hastens fetal lung maturity; indicated if delivery is anticipated between 24 and 34 wk

## Progesterone for the Prevention of Preterm Birth

Previous singleton  
preterm birth  
(16 to 37 weeks)



17-alpha-hydroxy-  
progesterone  
caproate 250 mg.,  
IM at 16 to 20 weeks  
& weekly until 36  
weeks

Selective or  
universal screening  
(18 through 24 weeks)



Transvaginal cervical  
length  $\leq$  20 mm



Vaginal progesterone:  
200 mg. suppositories  
or 90 mg. vaginal gel  
until 36 weeks

No proven benefit in  
twins or triplets

IM=intramuscular  
mg.=milligrams  
mm=millimeters

Prediction of preterm labour is one of the most difficult and important task faced by clinicians. Many studies have been conducted to find suitable predictor for preterm labour for its timely prediction and appropriate management.

### **RADIOLOGICAL MARKERS** like

1. Cervical length
2. Uterocervical angle may have major impact on preterm birth

### **CERVICAL LENGTH:**

Cervical length is a measure of the distance between internal os and external os. It can be performed by 4 methods :Digital examination, Transvaginal ultrasound ,transabdominal ultrasound and by transperineal ultrasound. Each technique has its costs and benefits

Digital examination or the per vaginum examination is one of the most common methods practiced by clinicians. However number of studies have failed to prove its sensitivity. The main underlying reason for this is its user subjectively and also it cannot detect reproducibly any changes at the level of internal os and the upper portion of the cervical canal. The majority of studies have found that ultrasound assessment of cervical length is superior to digital examination for the prediction of preterm birth. Measuring cervical length by usg has become a routine practice today as an objective and noninvasive method to evaluate the preterm labour. With this, apart from cervical length measurement, it is possible to do structural and functional evaluations, such as condition and appearance of internal os, cervical dilatation together with membrane herniation and cervical responses to uterine contractions and fundal pressure.

Transvaginal ultrasound is considerably more sensitive than transabdominal ultrasound for the measurement of cervical length. The main reason behind this is that in transabdominal approach, the cervix may not be visualized in up to 50% of cases unless the bladder is full, but bladder filling also significantly increases the length of the cervix. In contrast, transvaginal ultrasound is performed with empty bladder. Therefore the cervix should be assessed by TVS.

In those cases, where TVS should be avoided, such as in those with preterm prelabour rupture of membranes or when the patient is not willing for transvaginal route, the cervical length can be measured by transperineal ultrasonography. Theoretically, transperineal ultrasonography has an advantage over transvaginal ultrasonography, that no pressure is put on the cervix to artifactually elongate the cervical canal, as can occur in the TVS approach. It has been found that transperineal ultrasound can be accurate as transabdominal ultrasound for examining the cervix and one study found it was more acceptable to women than TVS. Other studies have shown that when adequate images obtained, Transperineal ultrasound can predict preterm labour as accurately as TVS.

Assessment of cervical length by transabdominal ultrasound can be used as an initial evaluation but it should be borne in mind that, especially in cases with a short cervix, this modality tends to overestimate the true cervical length. Therefore, a proper risk assessment should be based on a TVS or Transperineal ultrasound.

In our study we are going to study the impact of uterocervical angle on preterm birth.

There are many studies are being conducted to evaluate the impact of uterocervical angle on preterm birth. The concept behind this is that the cervix lies distal to the body of uterus and is bounded superiorly by the uterine isthmus. Internal os is the histological and anatomical junction between uterus and cervical stroma, and the endocervical canal extends from external to internal os

Physiologic weight distribution put pressure on the internal os, which can directly affects UCA and if UCA is wide it will increase the loading force which can lead to effacement. The patho-physiological principle behind UCA is purely physical follows the rules gravity and trigonometry. With advancing pregnancy, the force of pregnant uterus is shifted towards the cervix and depending upon the angle of inclination, the cervical canal is either pressed shut in case of an acute angle or pressed open in case of an obtuse angle.

The first article that supported predicting spontaneous preterm birth by UCA was written by Cannie et al. who reported that the efficacy of the arabian pessary in preventing preterm birth was significantly influenced by the change in the UCA pre and post pessary insertion<sup>11-15</sup>.

Another study done by **SOCHACKI-WOJCICKS ET AL**<sup>18</sup> in 2015, revealed the detection rates of UCA for spontaneous PTB of 61.1% in the first trimester and 66.7% in the second trimester which were superior to cervical length(CL) in their study.

Uterocervical angle measurement was also investigated by DZIADOSZ et al<sup>19</sup> as a tool in prediction of preterm birth. They analyzed retrospectively the cervical images which were taken during the transvaginal ultrasound of 972 singleton pregnant women. It was found that the cases with  $UCA \geq 95$  degree had significantly more preterm labors before 37 weeks of gestation (sensitivity 80%;  $p < 0.001$ ; negative predictive value 95%) and the cases with  $UCA \geq 105$  degree had more deliveries before 37 weeks of gestation (sensitivity 81%;  $p < 0.001$ ; negative predictive value 99%).

A secondary result obtained in the same study was that the cervical length  $< 25$  mm was significant for the prediction of preterm birth. However, since sensitivity was 62% and negative predictive value was 95% in preterm births before 37 weeks of gestation and sensitivity was 63% and negative predictive value was 97% in preterm births before 34 weeks of gestation which was more than CL, it was concluded that the UCA measurement is more successful than cervical length measurement for the prediction of preterm birth.

SUR B ET AL<sup>20</sup> did a prospective study in 2017 on 100 singleton pregnant patients and found that there was a significant risk of preterm labour in women with cervical length  $< 2.5$  cm in the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester with Odds ratio 3.625,  $p$  value  $+0.001$ , sensitivity 75% and specificity 79.31%. The positive predictive value 33.33% and negative predictive value 95.83%. The difference of mean UCA in woman who delivered preterm and that of those who delivered at term, in the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester (preterm group 114.2 degree versus term group 93 degree,  $p$  value  $< 0.001$ ) and in the second trimester (preterm group 127.66 degree versus 103.65 degree,  $p$  value  $< 0.001$ ) was significant. UCA of 114 degree or more in the first trimester was associated with a risk of spontaneous preterm birth ( $p$  value 0.0065, sensitivity 90% and specificity

80%).UCA of 127.66 degree or more in the second trimester was associated with the a risk of spontaneous preterm birth(p value 0.0004,sensitivity 80% and specificity 80%). UCA of 127.66 degree or more in the second trimester was associated with a risk of spontaneous preterm birth(p value 0.0004,sensitivity 80% and specificity 88.23%). Overall UCA came out to be better predictor than CL in their study.

Bafali O et al<sup>21</sup> in 2018 studied 82 singleton pregnant women between 24 and 34 weeks of gestation. Bishop scores were calculated, and cervical length and UCA measurements were performed by transvaginal ultrasound. Among the etiological factors, only multiparity and abortion history were found significantly high in pregnant woman who had preterm delivery. The cut-off value for UCA measurements was determined to be 80.5%. the prevalence of UCA >80.5degree in women who delivered before 37 weeks of gestation was found to be 75% and it was significantly higher than the term cases (p=0.007).For this value, it was found that UCA sensitivity was 75 %, specificity was 58% ,positive predictive value was 53% and negative predictive value was 77%.

Notably, D'Onofrio and colleagues estimate the extent to which the associations between early gestational age and offspring mortality and morbidity are the result of confounding factors. The authors conducted a population-based cohort study, combining Swedish registries to identify all individuals born in Sweden from 1973 to 2008 (3,300,708 offspring of 1,736,735 mothers) and link them with multiple outcomes. The results showed that there was a dose-response relationship between risks of PTB and infant mortality.



In concordance with our findings, Llobet and colleagues[18] assessed the ability of the UCA to predict spontaneous preterm birth before 34 and 37 weeks of gestation. A prospective cohort study with singleton pregnancies between 19.0 and 22.6 weeks of gestation. Mean UCA in the second trimester was wider in the preterm group compared with the control group.

Likewise, Lynch and colleagues[19] aimed to determine if there is an association between UCA and sPTB < 37 weeks. Retrospective cohort study from 2014 to 2017 of pregnancies with cervical length (CL) screening between 15 and 24 weeks was conducted. The mean UCA was significantly lower for delivery  $\geq 37$  weeks compared to delivery

Sur and colleagues[20] performed a prospective observational study to evaluate the UCA of the uterus by transvaginal sonography and to determine the feasibility to predict spontaneous PTB. The duration of the study was from December 2014 to December 2016. The participants included 100 pregnant women with singleton pregnancy who were asymptomatic. The difference of mean cervical angle in women who delivered preterm and that of those who delivered at term in the 1st trimester (preterm group  $114.2^\circ$  vs term group  $93.0^\circ$ ) Vielba and colleagues assessed the ability of UCA compared with cervical length to predict the risk of spontaneous PTB. The authors conducted a retrospective cohort study of twin pregnancies undergoing transvaginal ultrasound between 19-21 weeks. A total of 177 women were included. ROC curves showed a better area under the curve (AUC) for UCA at all gestational ages compared with cervical length.

Llobet and colleagues aimed to determine whether the UCA correlates with the risk of spontaneous PTB and assess its inter-observer variability. Case control study of 275 women including 34 who started labor spontaneously and gave birth before 34 weeks of gestation (preterm group) and 241 who gave birth at term (control group). Mean UCA in the second trimester was wider in the preterm group (105.16°) compared with the control group (94.53°),  $p=.01$

On the contrary, Gründler and colleagues compared the test properties of CL and UCA on patients at risk for preterm birth. 109 patients with at least one of the following signs of threatening preterm birth between 20 and 31 weeks were included in a prospective cohort analysis. The UCA was on average 103° and the mean UCA in preterm and term groups did not differ significantly ( $P = .924$ ). The UCA was not predictive for threatened preterm birth, even if only singletons were considered.

Likewise, Lynch and colleagues aimed to determine if change in UCA is associated with an increased rate of preterm birth (less than 37 weeks) for women with a short cervix. A retrospective study was performed from January 2013 to March 2016 of singleton pregnancies undergoing universal cervical length screening. A total of 176 women met the inclusion criteria. There was no difference in the rate of preterm birth at  $< 34$  weeks or at  $< 37$  weeks based on a change in UCA (i.e., decreased/ no change or increased UCA). However, women with a final UCA  $>105$  degrees had an increased risk of preterm birth at less than 34 weeks

To summarize ,CL has been extensively studied for the prediction of preterm birth, especially when measured during the mid trimester in high risk population (CL<2.5cm) or in patients with previous history of preterm labour.

However ,in some studies , it has been seen that the sensitivity of CL for predicting preterm labour is less, but its negative predictive value is still good. So another marker, UCA with good sensitivity and negative predictive value is now being studied and used for risk prediction and showed better results than CL for prediction of spontaneous preterm birth in low risk populations.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

The present study was conducted on antenatal patients in the DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY of GOVERNMENT RSRM LYING IN HOSPITAL CHENNAI between the period of November 2020 -November 2021.

Patients attending the antenatal opd were enrolled ,who satisfied the inclusion criteria. Written informed consent was taken from the patients after explaining the nature of the study.

### **STUDY DESIGN:**

Descriptive study.

### **SAMPLE SIZE:**

We recruited 110 patients for our study

### **STUDY CENTER:**

GOVERNMENT RSRM LYING IN HOSPITAL

**DURATION OF STUDY:** November 2020 to October 2021

### **ETHICAL ISSUES:**

There was no unethical interventions in the study. Ethical clearance was taken from ethical committee before the commencement of study.

**INCLUSION CRITERIA:**

- Singleton antenatal patients in 2nd trimester(20-24 wks)of gestation at the time of enrollment
- 18-40years of age
- Primigravida without any high risk factors requiring preterm delivery
- Multigravida without any history of preterm birth

**EXCLUSION CRITERIA:**

- patient who refused to give valid consent
- Congenital malformation of uterus and fetus
- Any placental abnormality
- Patient with cervical length <2.5cm
- IVF/IUI conceived pregnancy
- Previous history of preterm labour, any cervical surgery, unexplained IUD
- Psychiatric ,medical illness

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The patients were educated about the study on their own language. A written informed consent was obtained from all the patients in their own language and an information sheet was provided for their queries.

A complete history was noted. The following points were noted for the purpose of the study.

- 1.Age of the patient
- 2.obstetric history with parity
- 3.details of previous pregnancy
- 4.Gestational age of the patient
- 5.General information: personal history, family history ,socioeconomic status.

## **EXAMINATION:**

General physical examination and obstetric examination were carried out in antenatal opd and following also noted

## **ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS:**

1. Maternal height
2. Maternal weight
3. BMI

## **RADIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION:**

For our study transvaginal ultrasound was done along with the routine anomaly scan and growth scan. Utero-cervical angle was measured twice on every enrolled patients during our study

## **PRE REQUISITES;**

Before the evaluation of the cervix with transvaginal ultrasonography, the patient was asked to empty the bladder because distended bladder will alter the shape of the cervix and compress the cervical canal in some cases preventing the detection of cervical incompetence<sup>22-25</sup>. Patient was asked to lie down in lie down position with hips elevated on cushion.

The vaginal probe was covered in a cover and sterile gel was poured over it as coupling agent and then placed in the anterior fornix without much pressure. If the probe is pressed too hard against the cervix, it can obscure the incompetence of cervix. Initial orientation of the cervix was established by locating the sagittal view of the cervix as it may differ from the maternal longitudinal axis. The cervical canal will appear as a hypoechoic groove. In order to avoid inclusion of the isthmus into the cervical length measurement, we should be carefully identify internal as well as the external os. The external os should be identify as the point at which the anterior as well as posterior lip of cervix come together.

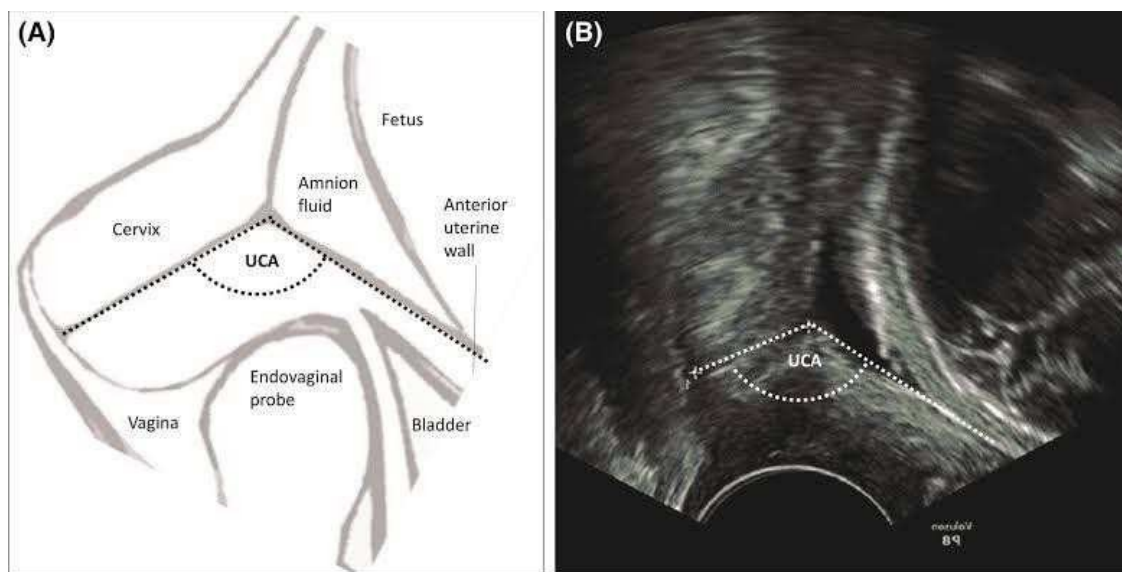
The internal os should be identified by the cervical mucosa which was usually hypoechoic as compared to the surrounding stroma. A thin line of demarcation between the stroma and the cervical mucosa can generally be identified on ultrasound. The Point at which the cervical mucosa ends is considered to be the internal os.

The image should sufficiently magnified so that the morphology of cervix was easily identifiable.

The cervix should occupy 50-75% of the image.

If the cervical canal is curved, the CL can be measured either as the sum of two straight lines that essentially follow the curve or by straight line between external and internal os.

A short CL is usually straight, and the presence of the curved cervix generally signifies the CL greater than 25mm and therefore , it is reassuring finding. If a normal appearing cervix could not be visualized , the cervix should be reassessed to further determine whether funneling was present or not<sup>26</sup>



**A] PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF MEASUREMENT OF UCA**

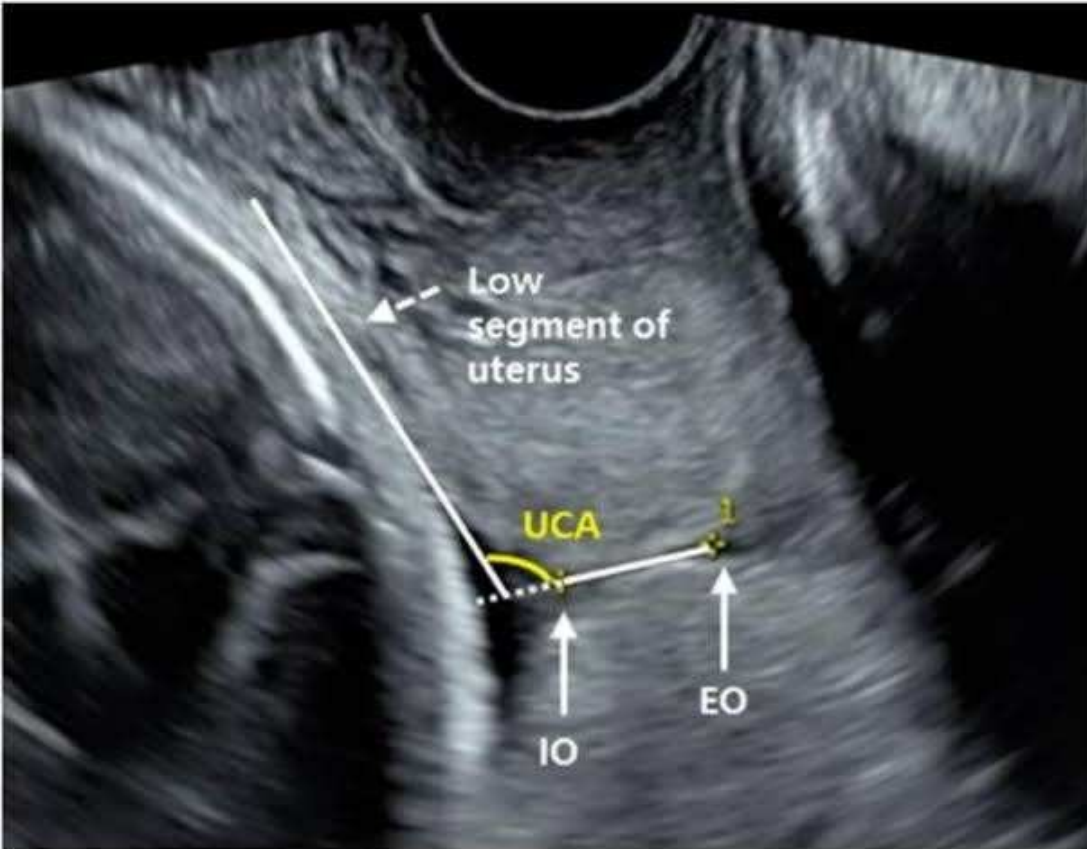
**B] TRANSVAGINAL ULTRASONOGRAPHY OF UCA**



The cervix is not a static structure and the length can vary due to contraction of uterus or different position of the patients. Therefore, sufficient time should be allotted for the examination of cervix.

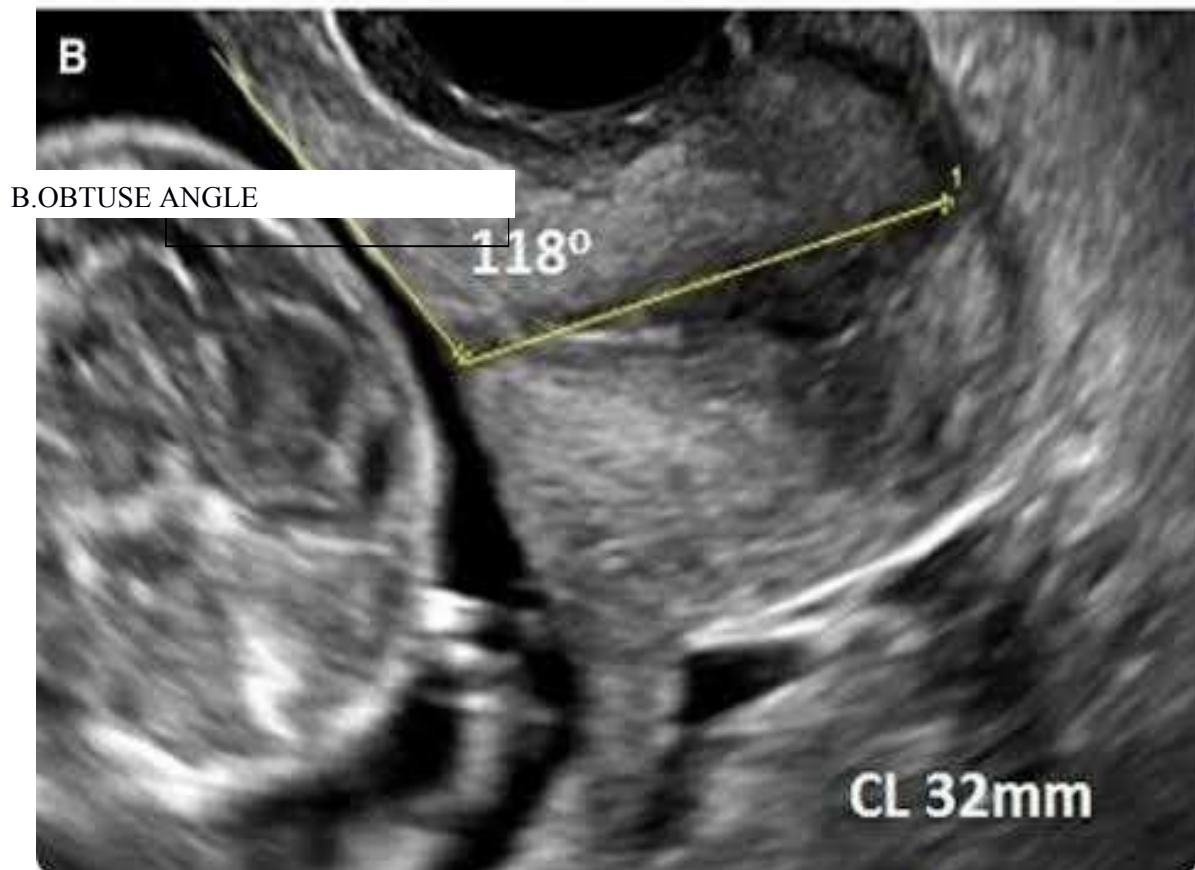
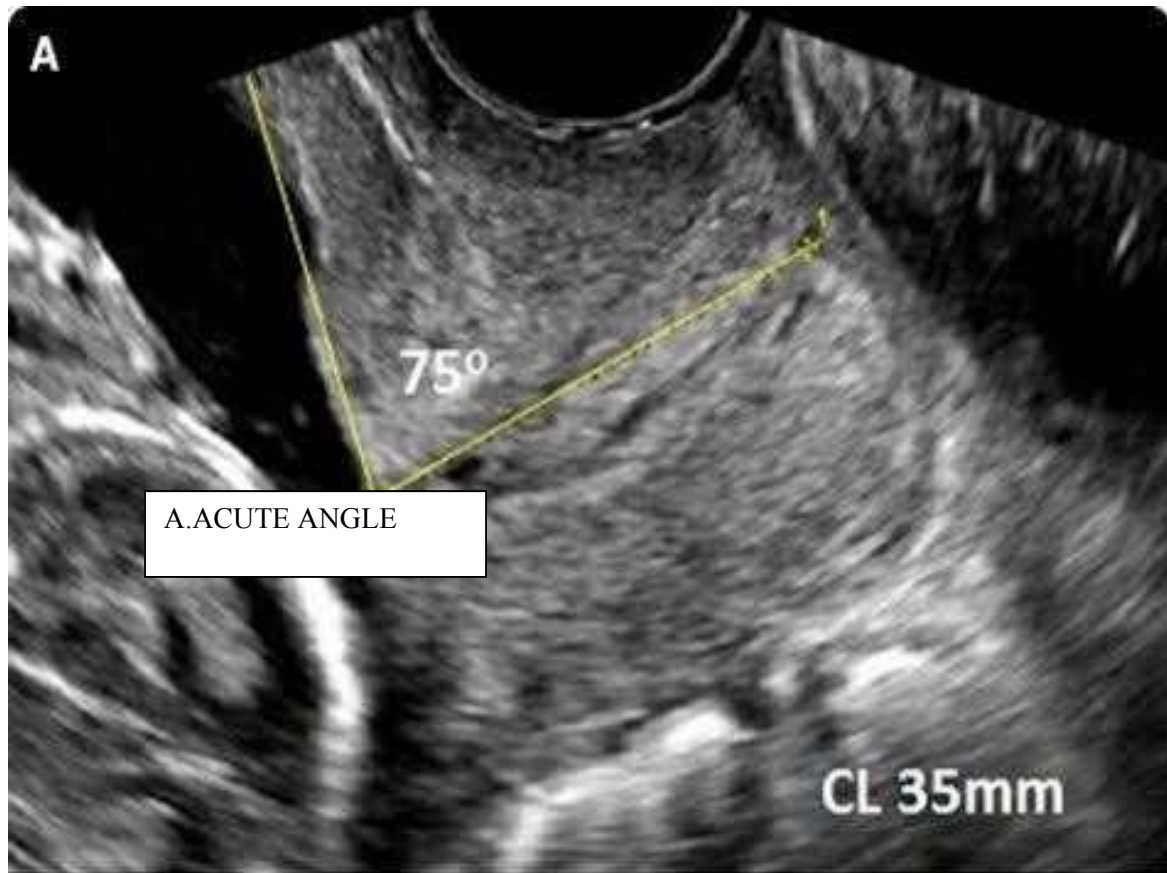
In our study two measurements were obtained in each patients during the course of examination and shortest measurement was used for reporting and counseling.

For the measurement of UCA , the probe was slowly withdrawn until the image become blurred and then the insertion pressure was increased enough to restore the clear cervical image. The electronic markers were placed at the farthest points between the external to internal os as a straight line. The first angle caliper was placed from the external to internal os and the second caliper was extended along the the length of lower uterine segment. A second ray was then drawn to delineate the lower uterine segment. This ray was then traced up the anterior uterine segment to a distance of upto 3cm of the lower uterine segment in order to establish an adequate measurement. The anterior angle in between the two rays was measured.



The image shows measurement of utero-cervical angle by,

- The first angle caliper was placed from the external to internal os
- The second caliper was extended along the the length of lower uterine segment



If uterocervical cervical angle was more than 95 degree at any time of examination, I will treat the patient accordingly.

After that all women were followed- both normal angle and abnormal angle patient with intervention {tocolytics, cervical encirclage, progesterone etc) throughout the course of gestation and delivered in our hospital

After delivery POG,weight of newborn,sex,APGAR,need for icu were noted and analysed

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:** Descriptive analysis was used to process the analysis outcome.

Collected data was checked for accuracy and completeness

**Formula used:**

According to the previous studies, sensitivity of the uterocervical angle to study for the impact of preterm birth was 80%. For the purpose of calculating the sample size, we have made sensitivity of 70%.

$$n = Z^2 P(1-P) / E^2$$

where,

n= sample size

Z= Z statistic for a level of confidence of 95%, which is conventional, Z value is 1.96

P=sensitivity of the test

(in proportion of one; if 70%, P=0.70), and

E= margin of error (in proportion of one; if 10%, d=0.10)

**Calculations:**

$$Z=1.96 \quad P=0.7 \quad E=0.1$$

$$n=1.96 \times 1.96 \times 0.7 \times 0.3 / (0.1)^2 = 80.6$$

Sample size was required to get results near perfection was 110..so we recruited 110 patients for our study.

**STATISTICAL METHODS:**

Categorical variables were presented in number and percentage and continues variables were presented as  $\pm$ SD and median.

A p value of  $<0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

## OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

### 5.1 Age Distribution of Patients

The mean age distribution of patients and their standard deviation were calculated given in Table 5.1 and graphically represented in Figure 5.1. The mean UCA  $<95 = 27.518 \pm 3.986$  and the mean UCA  $\geq 95 = 27.167 \pm 3.457$ . Both conditions having equal effects were observed. The probability value was also calculated; p-value is  $0.623 > 0.05$  statistically not significant

**Table 5.1 Age Distribution of Patients**

Age	UCA $<95$	UCA $\geq 95$
< 25	17	14
26 - 30	35	20
> 30	12	12
Total	64	46
Mean	27.518	27.167
SD	3.986	3.457
P'value	0.623 Not significant	

## COMPARISON OF AGE

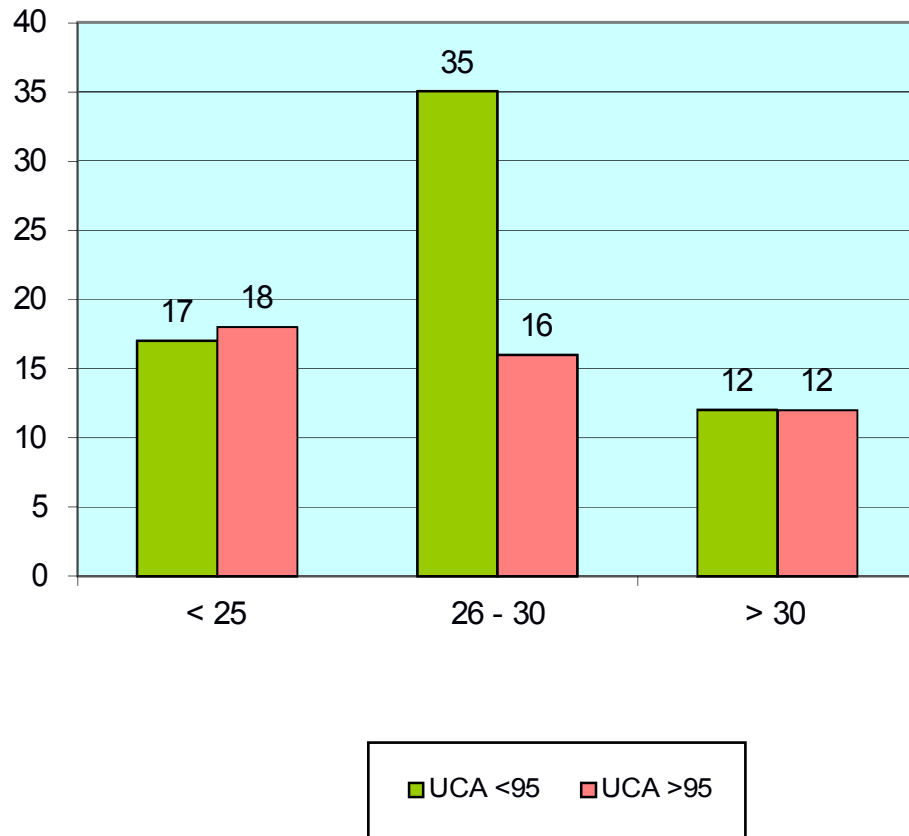


figure 5.1 Mean age distribution of patients



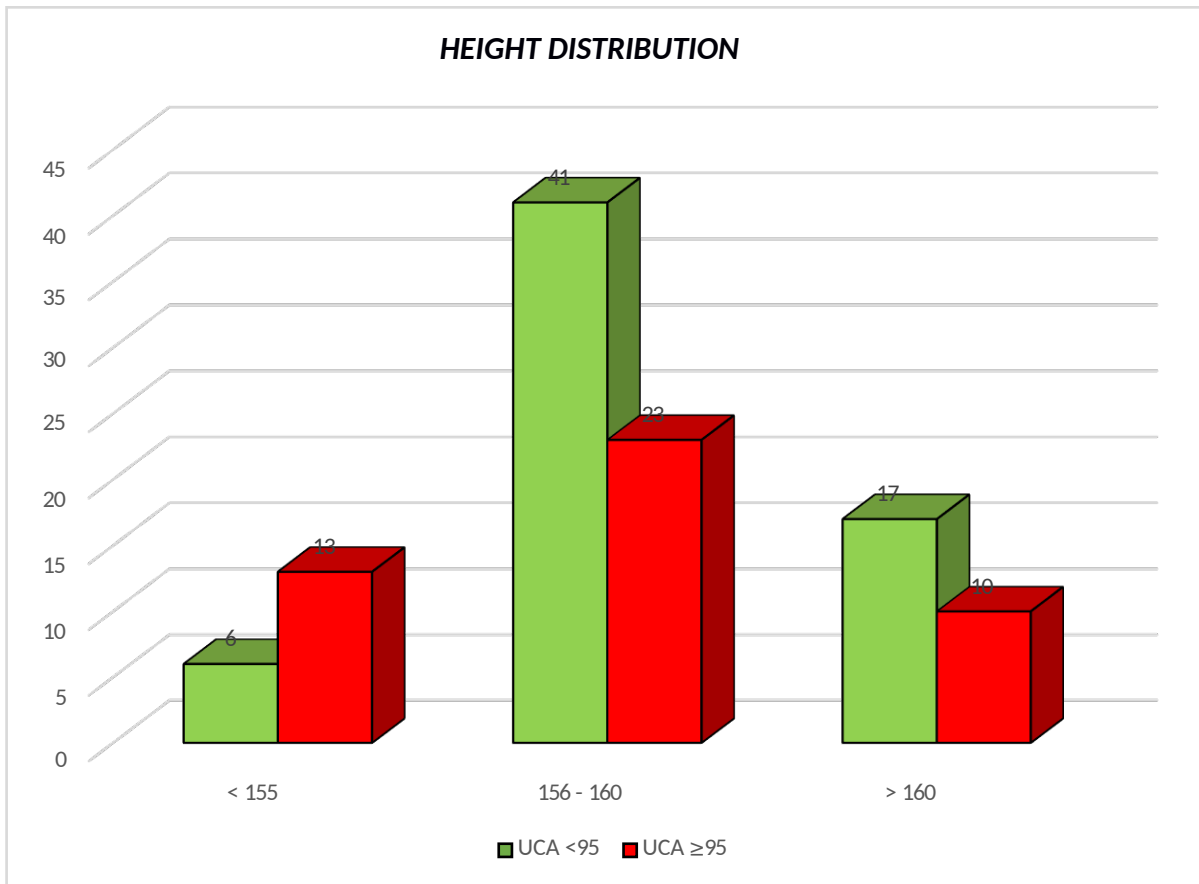
## 5.2 Height Distribution of Patients

The mean height distribution of patients and their standard deviation were calculated and represented in Table 5.2. The mean UCA <95 =  $158.893 \pm 3.409$  and the mean UCA  $\geq 95$  =  $157.963 \pm 3.539$ . Most of the patients having in the height group of 156 – 160. The probability value of height distribution of patients was also calculated; p-value is  $0.163 > 0.05$  statistically not significant. It is represented in figure 5.2

**Table 5.2 Mean height distribution of patients**

Height	UCA <95	UCA $\geq 95$
< 155	6	13
156 - 160	41	23
> 160	17	10
Total	64	46
Mean	158.893	157.963
SD	3.409	3.539
P'value	0.163 Not significant	

**FIGURE 5.2 mean height distribution**



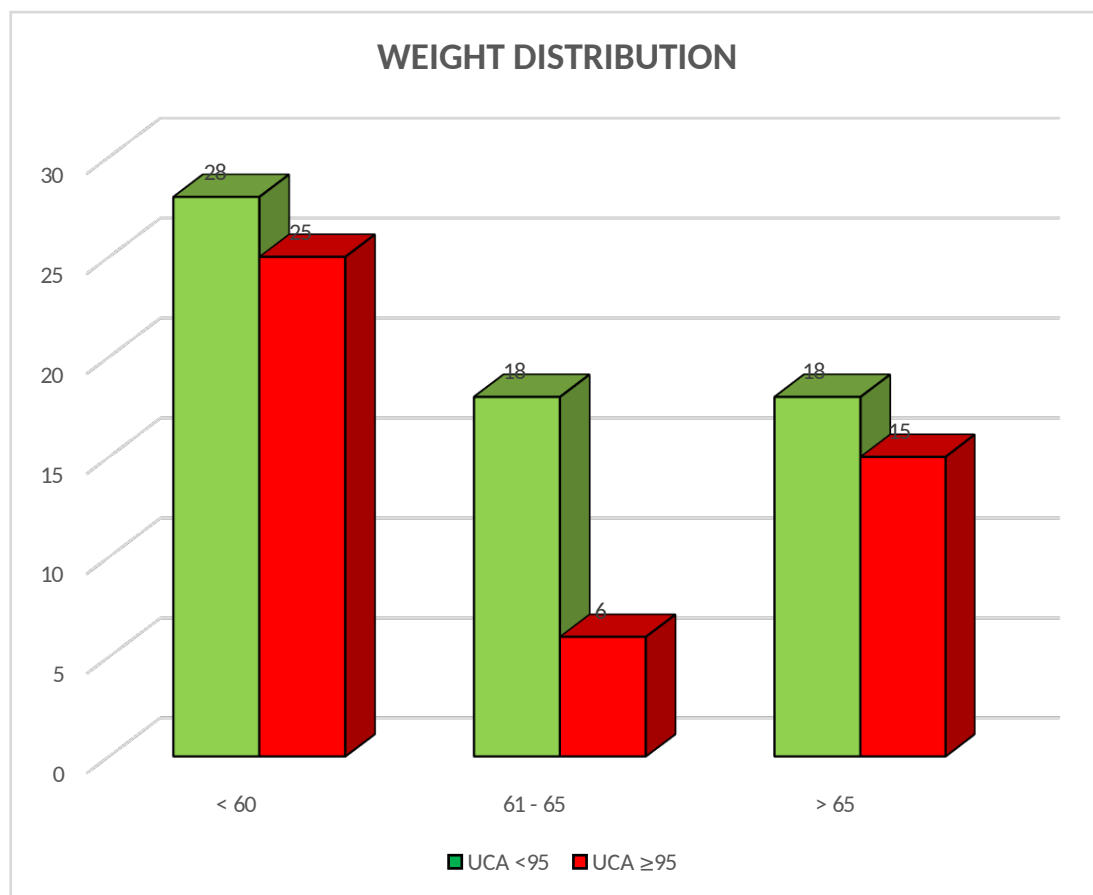
### 5.3 Weight Distribution of Patients

The mean weight distribution of patients and their standard deviation were calculated . The mean UCA  $<95 = 61.714 \pm 5.733$  and the mean UCA  $\geq 95 = 60.5 \pm 7.147$ . Most of the patients having in the weight group of  $< 60$ . The probability value of weight distribution of patients was also calculated; p-value is  $0.327 > 0.05$  statistically not significant. It is represented in figure 5.3

**Table 5.3 Mean weight distribution of patients**

Weight	UCA $<95$	UCA $\geq 95$
$< 60$	28	25
61 - 65	18	6
$> 65$	18	15
Total	64	46
Mean	61.714	60.5
SD	5.733	7.147
P'value	0.327 Not significant	

Figure 5.3. Mean weight distribution



#### 5.4 BMI value of patients

The BMI value of patients and their standard deviation were calculated and tabulated in Table 5.4. The BMI value of UCA <95 = 24.379± 2.259 and the mean UCA ≥95 = 24.263 ± 2.781. Most of the patients having in the BMI value of < 23.1 - 26.0. The probability value of BMI of patients was also calculated; p-value is 0.811 > 0.05 statistically not significant. It is represented in figure 5.4

**Table 5.4 BMI value of patients**

BMI	UCA <95	UCA <u>≥</u> 95
< 23.0	25	15
23.1 - 26.0	27	18
> 26.0	12	13
Total	64	46
Mean	24.379	24.263
SD	2.259	2.781
P'value	0.811 Not significant	

### COMPARISON OF BMI

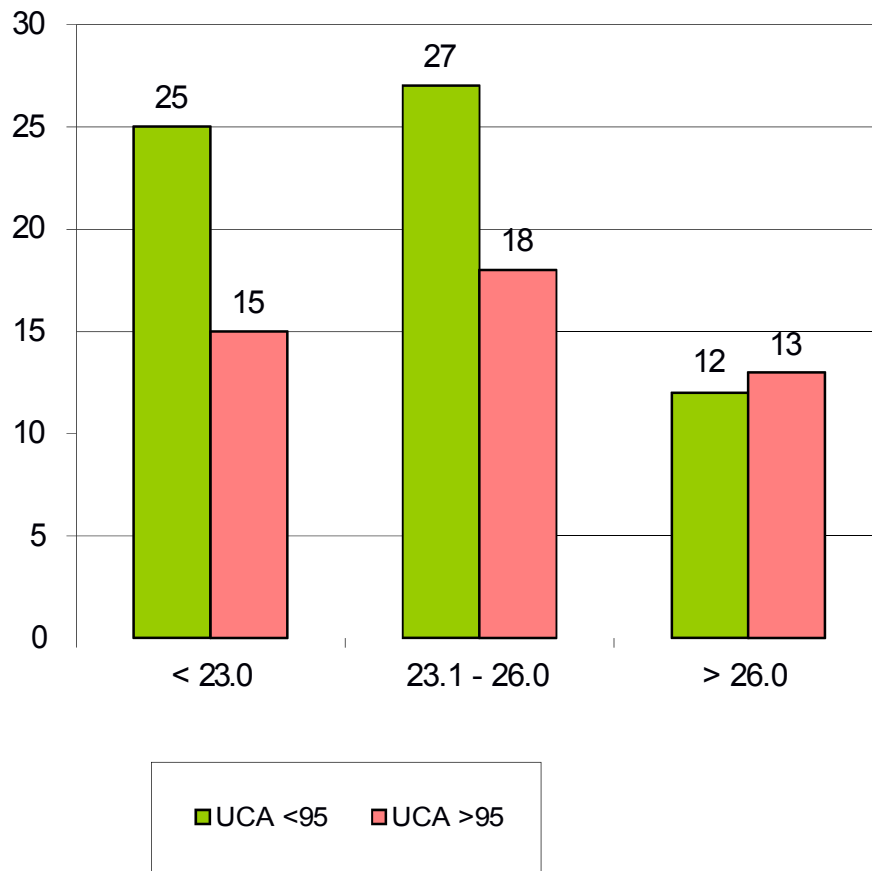


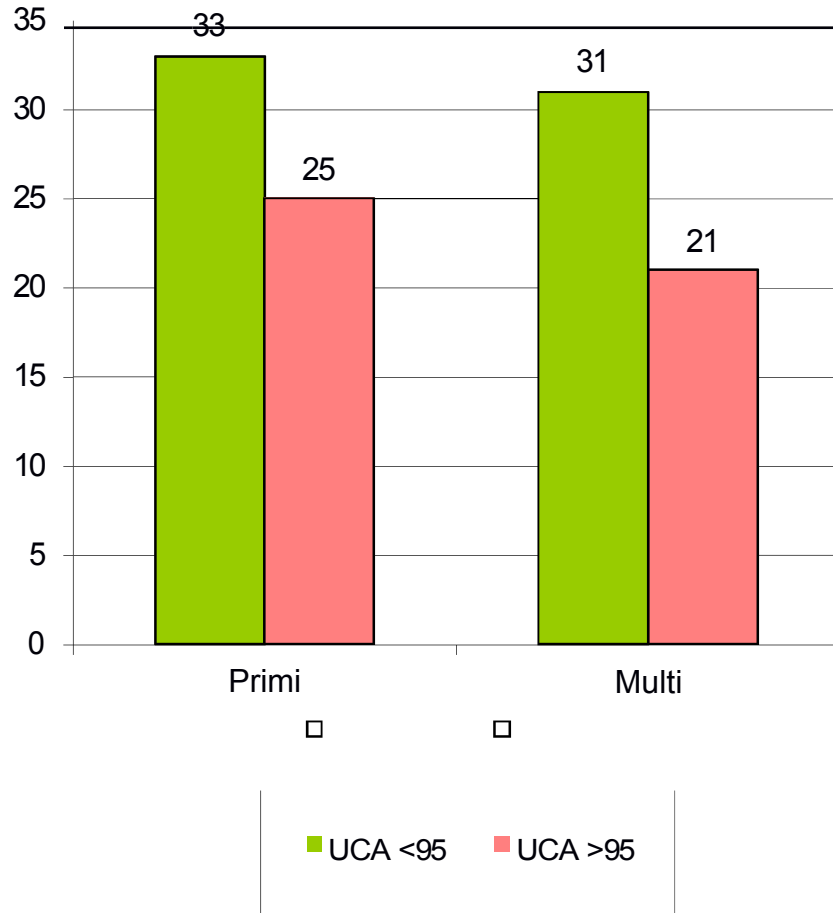
Figure 5.4 BMI value vs UCA

## 5.5 Comparison of Parity

**Table 5.5 Comparison of Parity value**

Parity	UCA <95	UCA <u>≥</u> 95
Primi	33	25
Multi	31	21
Total	64	46
P'value	0.256 Not significant	

### COMPARISON OF PARITY



**Figure 5.5 Comparison of Parity.** It was observed from our study that there was no significant association between parity and UCA value



## 5.6 Intervention of patients

In our study we intervene all the 46 patients who had angle more than or equal to 95 which was diagnosed during our course of study.

**Table 5.6 Intervention of patients**

Intervention	UCA <95	UCA <u>≥</u> 95
Yes	1	46
No	63	0
Total	0	0
P'value	<0.001 Significant	

### Comparison Of Intervention

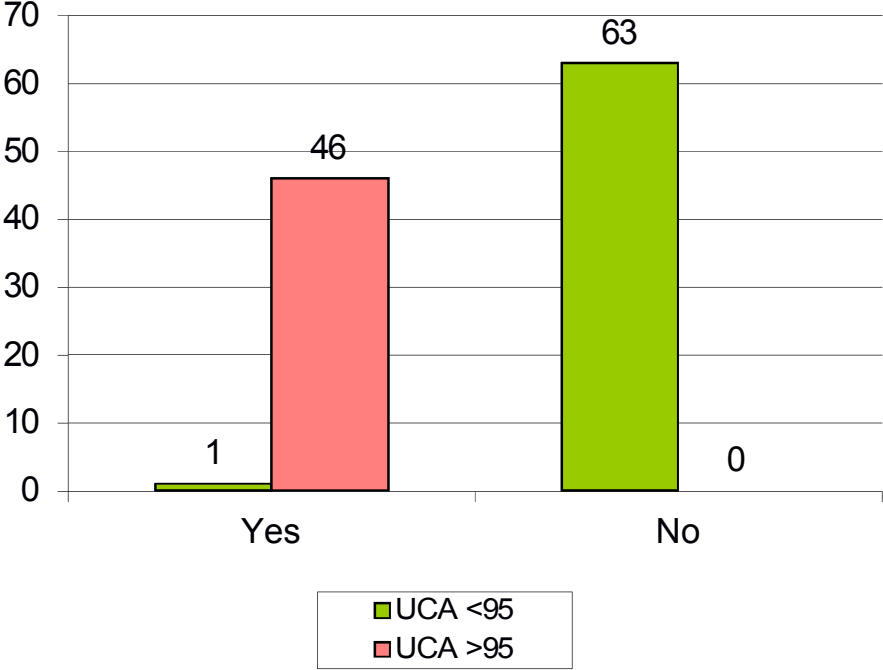
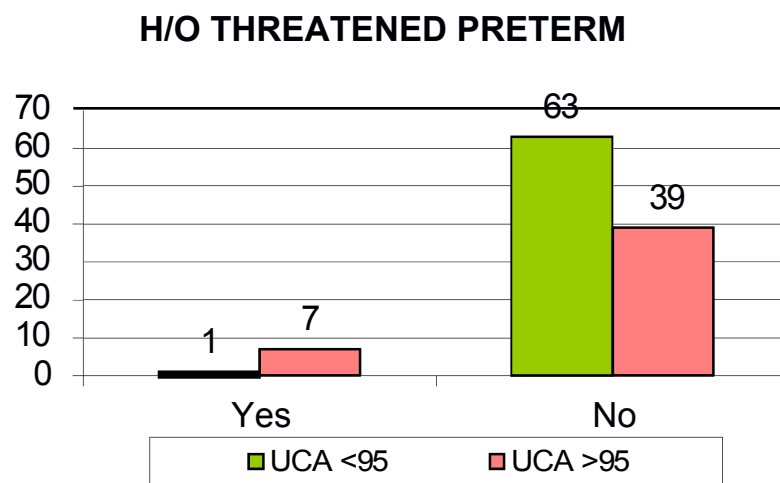


Figure 5.6: comparison of intervention

## 5.7 H/O Threatened Preterm

**Table 5.7 The H/O Threatened Preterm**

H/O Threatened Preterm	UCA <95	UCA <u>≥</u> 95
Yes	1	7
No	63	39
Total	0	0
P'value	0.017 Significant	



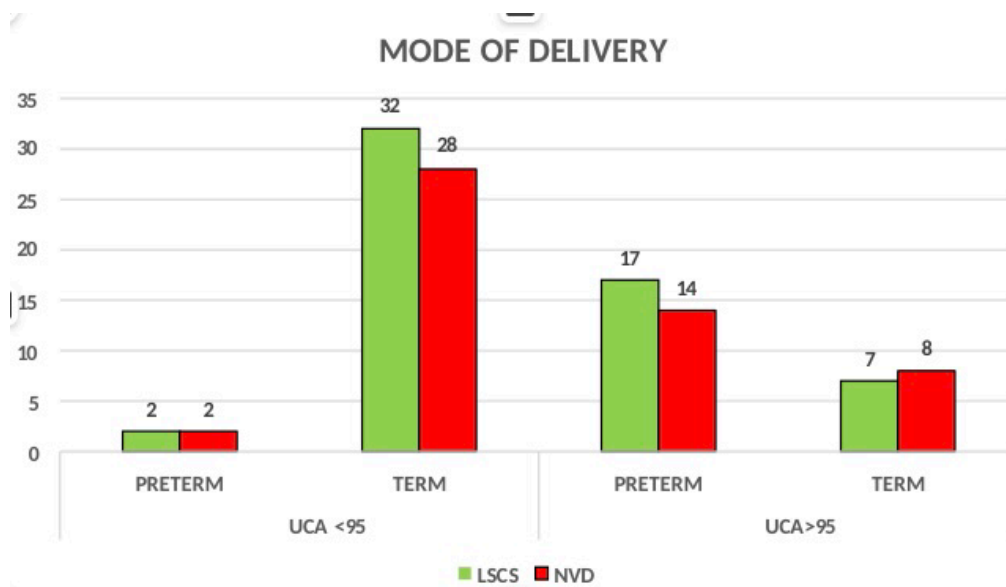
**Figure 5.7 H/o threatened preterm**

History of Threatened Preterm were also calculated for this study and mentioned in Table 5.7. Out of 46 patients who have angle more than 95, 7 patients had a history of threatened preterm labour, 5 patients among them delivered preterm and 2 patient delivered at term who responds to conservative management. The majority of patients with H/O Threatened Preterm have angle  $\geq 95$ . The probability value of H/O Threatened Preterm have been calculated; p-value is  $0.017 < 0.05$  statistically significant.

## 5.8 Mode of Delivery

**Table 5.8 Modeof Delivery**

MODE OF DELIVERY	UCA <95		UCA>95	
	PRETERM	TERM	PRETERM	TERM
LSCS	2	32	17	7
NVD	2	28	14	8
Total	4	60	31	15



**Figure 5.8 Mode of Delivery**

The mode of delivery and their procedure have been calculated and given in Table 5.8 and graphically represented in Figure 5.8. In LSCS procedure having UCA <95 = 34, UCA  $\geq$ 95 = 24; in NVD having UCA <95 = 30, UCA  $\geq$ 95 = 22. Probability value is 0.258 > 0.05 statistically not significant.

### 5.9 Comparison of Birth weight

BIRTH WT in Kgs	UCA <95	UCA >95
Mean	2.85	2.55

Table 5.9 comparison of birth weigh

### COMPARISON OF BIRTH WEIGHT

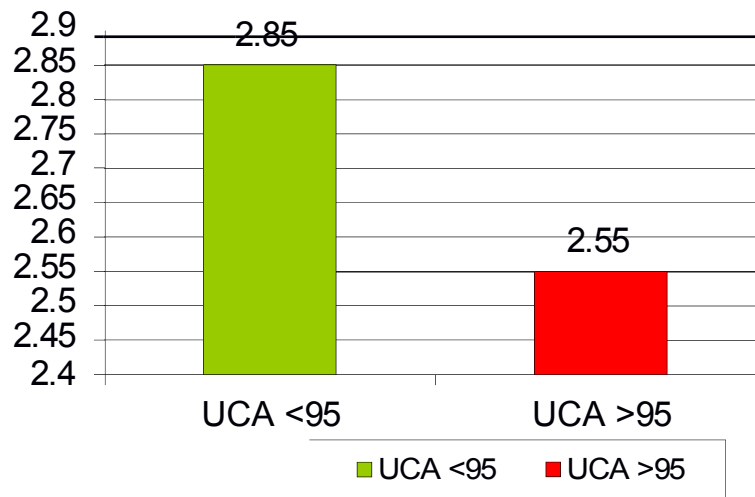


Figure 5.9 Comparison of Birth weight

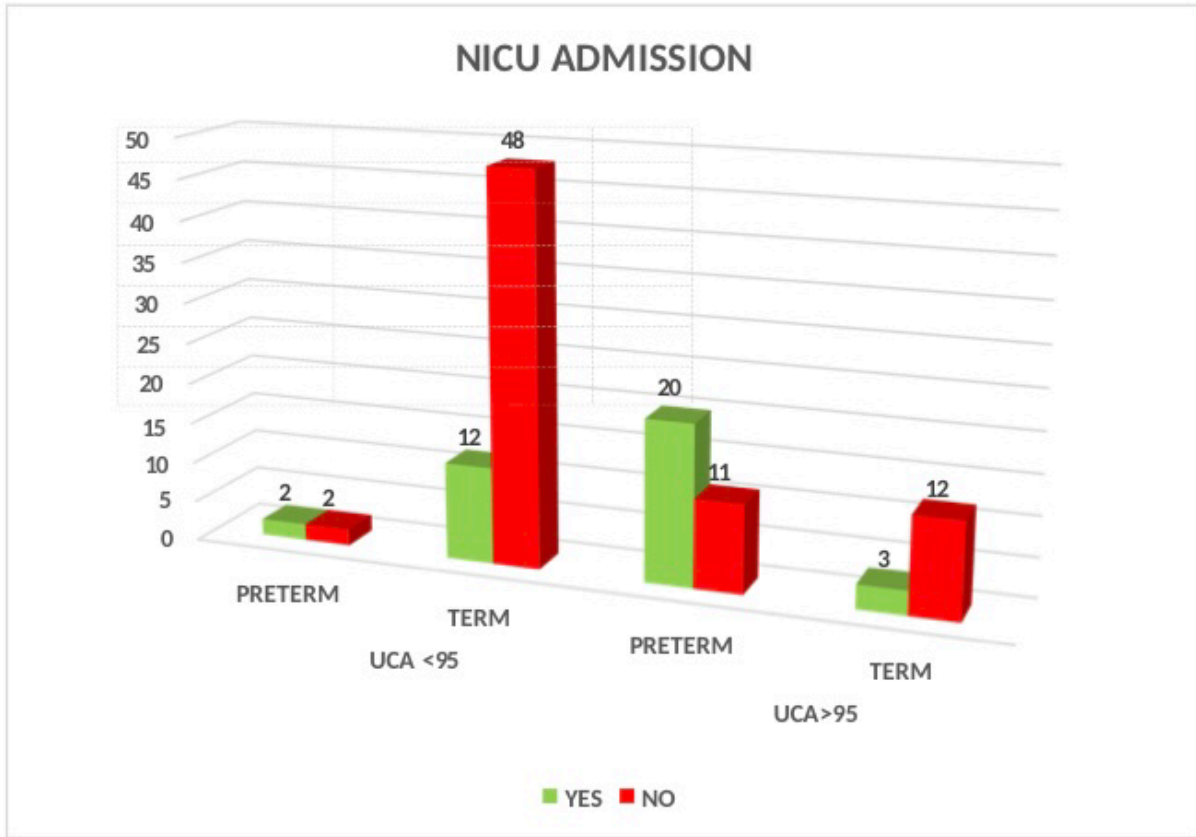
Comparison of birth weight have been calculated and graphically represented in Figure 5.9. UCA<95 = 2.85 having higher weight compare to other.

## 5.10 UCA Vs NICU Admission

**Table 5.10 UCA-2<sup>nd</sup> TRIMESTER Vs NICU Admission**

NICU ADMISSION	UCA <95		UCA >95	
	PRETERM	TERM	PRETERM	TERM
YES	2	12	20	3
NO	2	48	11	12
Total	4	60	31	15





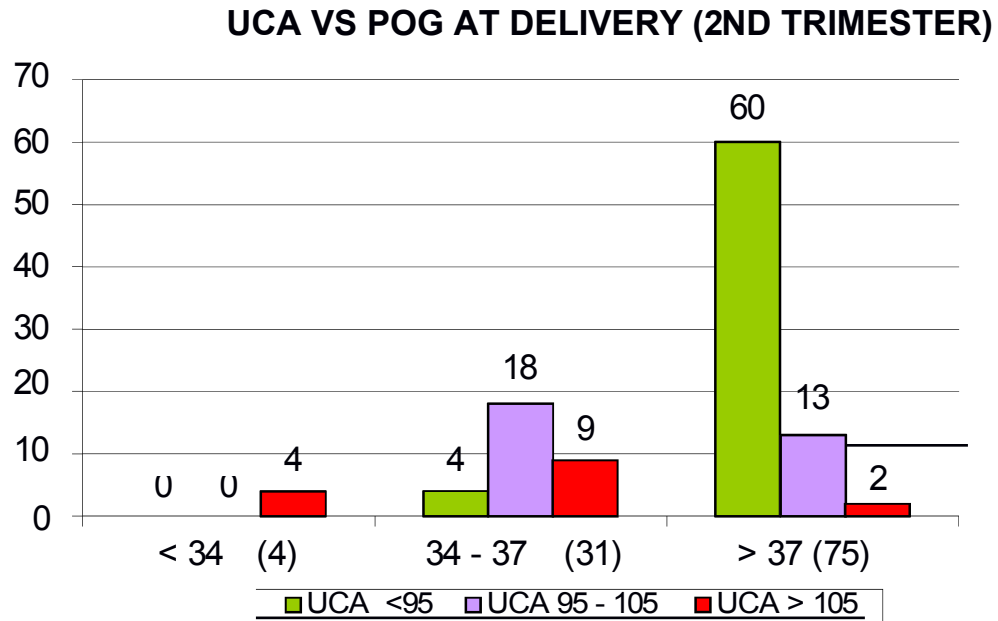
**Figure 5.10: UCA Vs NICU Admission**

NICU admission was significantly more for the patients delivered for angle more than 95 who delivered preterm when compared to angle less than 95 who predominantly delivered at term. so it was concluded that if UCA angle is wider which was prone to preterm delivery and more chance of admission in NICU.

### 5.11 POG at Delivery vs 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester UCA Table

#### 5.11 POG at Delivery vs 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester UCA

POG at Delivery	UCA		
	<95	95 - 105	> 105
< 34 (4)	0	0	4
34 - 37 (31)	4	18	9
> 37 (75)	60	13	2
Total	64	31	15
P'value	<0.001 Significant		



**Figure 5.11 : UCA VS POG AT DELIVERY (2ND TRIMESTER).** Among 110 patients

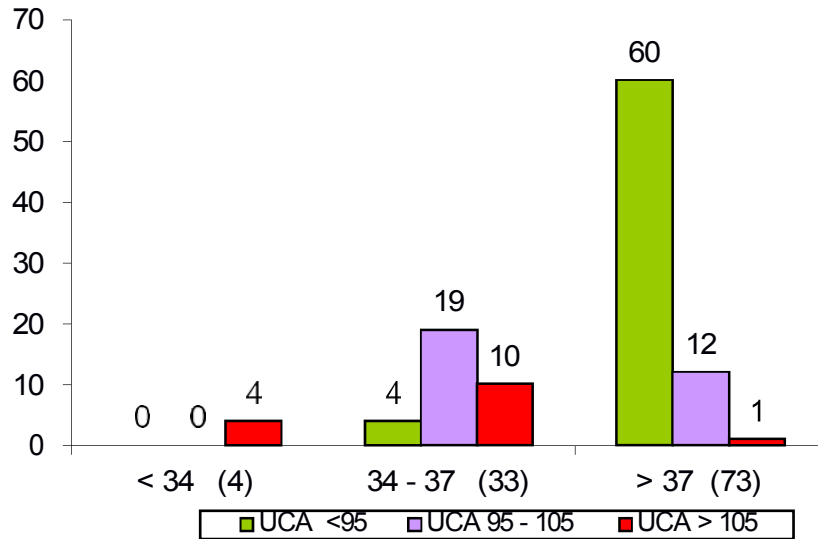
64 patients have angle less than 95, In that 60 patients delivered at term and 4 patients were delivered preterm. 46 patients have angle more than 95, In that 31 patients were delivered preterm and 15 patients were delivered term. so we concluded that acute angle delivered at term and wider the angle more prone for preterm delivery even if we intervene if the angle is wider. It is represented in table 5.11 and figure 5.11.

## 5.12 POG at Delivery vs 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester UCA

**Table 5.12 POG vs UCA 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester**

POG at Delivery	UCA		
	<95	95 - 105	> 105
< 34 (4)	0	0	4
34 - 37 (33)	4	19	10
> 37 (73)	60	12	1
Total	64	31	15

### UCA VS POG AT DELIVERY 3RD TRIMESTER



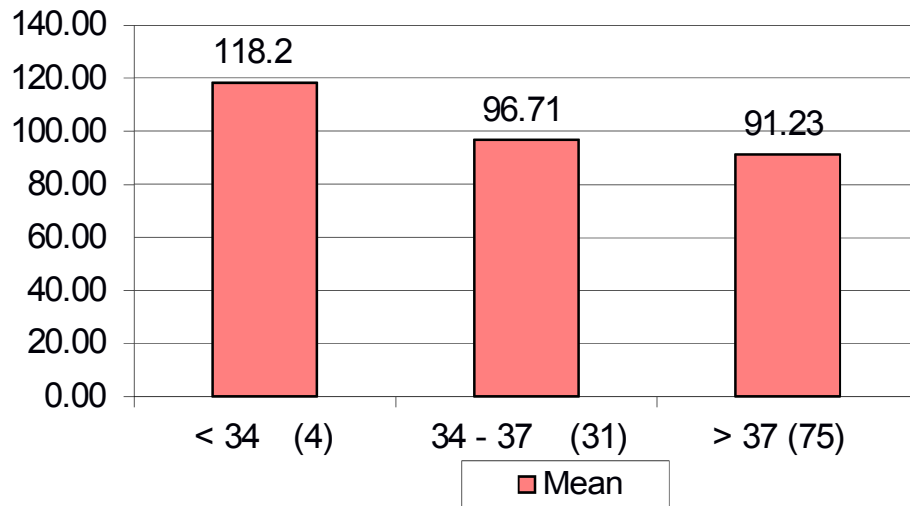
**Figure 5.12 POG vs UCA for Trimester 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester.** Among 110 patients 64 patients have angle less than 95, In that 60 patients delivered at term and 4 patients were delivered preterm. 46 patients have angle more than 95, In that 33 patients were delivered preterm and 13 patients were delivered term. so we concluded that acute angle delivered at term and wider the angle more prone for preterm delivery even if we intervene if the angle is wider

### 5.13 POG at Delivery vs 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester UCA Mean Table

#### 5.13 POG at Delivery vs 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester UCA Mean

	UCA	
POG AT DELIVERY	Mean	SD
< 34 (4)	118.25	6.238
34 - 37 (31)	96.71	13.317
> 37 (75)	91.23	7.889
p value	< 0.001 Significant	

### POG AT DELIVERY 2ND TRIMESTER VS UCA MEAN



**Figure 5.13: POG AT DELIVERY 2ND TRIMESTER VS UCA MEAN.** Mean UCA at second trimester preterm delivered patients was 118 for less than 34 weeks, 96 for 34-37 weeks which was significantly higher as compared to the patients with term delivered group 91. so it was concluded that patients with greater UCA in 2nd trimester had significantly higher chances of preterm delivery even after the intervention made if the angle is higher.

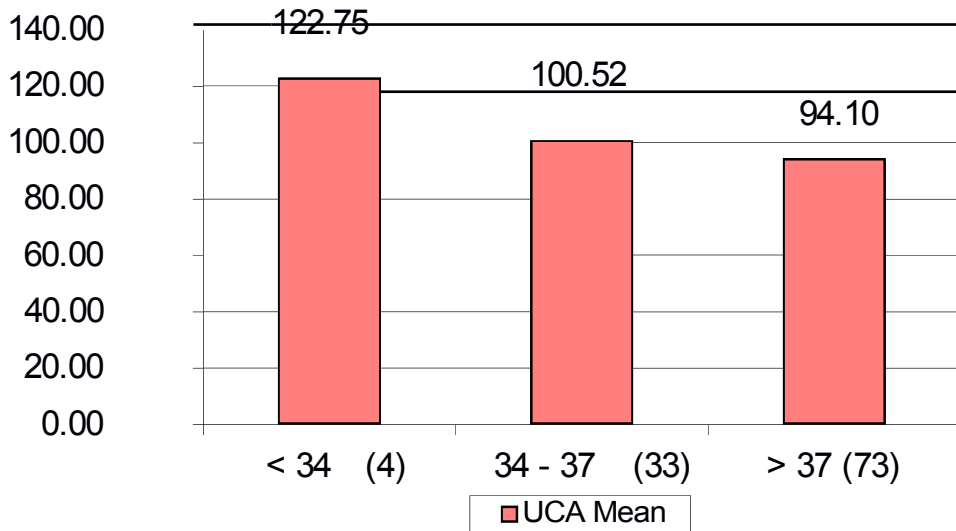
**5.14 POG AT delivery vs 3<sup>rd</sup> TRIMESTER UCA Mean**

**Table 5.14 POG at delivery vs 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester Vs UCA Mean**

	UCA	
POG AT DELIVERY	UCA Mean	SD
< 34 (4)	122.75	6.602
34 - 37 (33)	100.52	13.959
> 37 (73)	94.10	7.463
p value	< 0.001 Significant	



### POG AT 3RD TRIMESTER VS UCA Mean



**Figure 5.14 POG AT 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester Vs UCA Mean**

Mean UCA value at third trimester of preterm delivered patients was 122 for those who delivered less than 34 weeks, 100 for those who delivered between 34-37 weeks which was significantly higher as compared to term delivered patients which was 94.

So it is concluded that patients with greater UCA 3RD TRIMESTER had significantly higher chances of preterm delivery even after the intervention made if the angle is high and it was also seen in our study UCA value keeps on increasing with gestational age and mean UCA at every trimester predicts spontaneous preterm birth with equal predictive value and efficacy. However early prediction is always good to timely do the necessary interventions for the prevention of complication

## DISCUSSION

Preterm birth is defined as delivery before 37 weeks of gestation. According to WHO(2018) across 184 countries, the rate of preterm birth ranges from 5% to 18% of all births. Globally, it is estimated that 11.1% of births are preterm and prematurity is the direct cause of 27% neonatal death.

In developing countries like india, the major causes of perinatal morbidity is preterm birth .Although there have been important developments in the prognosis of preterm newborns with the newborn intensive care techniques developed in the last decades, no decrease has been achieved in the preterm birth rates.

At our institution ,incidence of preterm births was 24% during one year of study and incidence of preterm births in our study population was also 24%.

This is study to find the impact of uterocervical angle on preterm birth and to study the impact of uterocervical angle by transvaginal ultrasonography on preterm birth

The mean age UCA <95 =  $27.518 \pm 3.986$  and the mean UCA  $\geq 95 = 27.167 \pm 3.457$ . The mean height UCA <95 =  $158.893 \pm 3.409$  and the mean UCA  $\geq 95 = 157.963 \pm 3.539$ . Most of the patients having in the height group of 156 – 160. The mean weight UCA <95 =  $61.714 \pm 5.733$  and the mean UCA  $\geq 95 = 60.5 \pm 7.147$ . Most of the patients having in the weight group of < 60.

The BMI value of UCA  $<95 = 24.379 \pm 2.259$  and the mean UCA  $\geq 95 = 24.263 \pm 2.781$ . Most of the patients having in the BMI value of  $< 23.1 - 26.0$ . the demographical datas were comparable. It was observed from our study that there was no significant association between parity and UCA value .

In our study we intervene all the 46 patients who had angle more than or equal to 95 which was diagnosed during our course of study.

NICU admission was significantly more for the patients delivered for angle more than 95 who delivered preterm when compared to angle less than 95 who predominantly delivered at term.so it was concluded that if UCA angle is wider which was prone to preterm delivery and more chance of admission in NICU.

In LSCS procedure having UCA  $<95 = 34$ , UCA  $\geq 95 = 24$ ; in NVD having UCA  $<95 = 30$ , UCA  $\geq 95 = 22$ . Probability value is  $0.258 > 0.05$  statistically not significant for mode of delivery

Out of 46 patients who have angle more than 95 ,7 patients had a history of threatened preterm labour ,5 patients among them delivered preterm and 2 patient delivered at term who responds to conservative management. The majority of patients with H/O Threatened Preterm have angle  $\geq 95$  .The probability value of H/O Threatened Preterm have been calculated; p-value is  $0.017 < 0.05$  statistically significant.

Among 110 patients in 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester 64 patients have angle less than 95, In that 60 patients delivered at term and 4 patients were delivered preterm. 46 patients have angle more than 95, In that 31 patients were delivered preterm and 15 patients were delivered term.

Among 110 patients in 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester, 64 patients have angle less than 95, In that 60 patients delivered at term and 4 patients were delivered preterm. 46 patients have angle more than 95, In that 33 patients were delivered preterm and 13 patients were delivered term. so we concluded that acute angle delivered at term and wider the angle more prone for preterm delivery even if we intervene if the angle is wider

Mean UCA at second trimester preterm delivered patients was 118 for less than 34 weeks, 96 for 34-37 weeks which was significantly higher as compared to the patients with term delivered group 91. so it was concluded that patients with greater UCA 2nd trimester had significantly higher chances of preterm delivery even after the intervention made if the angle is higher.

Mean UCA value at third trimester of preterm delivered patients was 122 for those who delivered less than 34 weeks, 100 for those who delivered between 34-37 weeks which was significantly higher as compared to term delivered patients which was 94

So it is concluded that patients with greater UCA 3RD TRIMESTER had significantly higher chances of preterm delivery even after the intervention made if the angle is high and it was also seen in our study UCA value keeps on increasing with gestational age and mean UCA at every trimester predicts spontaneous preterm birth with equal predictive value and efficacy. However early prediction is always good to timely do the necessary interventions for the prevention of .complication

**Bafali O et al.**<sup>21</sup> in 2018 studied 82 singleton pregnant women between 24 and 34 weeks of gestation. Bishop scores were calculated, and cervical length and UCA measurements were performed by transvaginal ultrasound. Among the etiological factors, only multiparity and abortion history were found significantly high in pregnant woman who had preterm delivery. The cut-off value for UCA measurements was determined to be 80.5%. the prevalence of UCA >80.5degree in women who delivered before 37 weeks of gestation was found to be 75% and it was significantly higher than the term cases (p=0.007). For this value, it was found that UCA sensitivity was 75 %, specificity was 58% ,positive predictive value was 53% and negative predictive value was 77%. In our study also UCA has better predictive value.

**Sochacki-Wojcicks et al.**<sup>18</sup> in 2015, revealed the detection rates of UCA for spontaneous PTB of 61.1% in the first trimester and 66.7% in the second trimester which were superior to cervical length (CL) in their study. Like this in our study also measuring UCA length has positive predictive value.

- **PRINCIPLE FINDINGS:**

Our data indicates that UCA measurement is significantly associated with risk of preterm birth in women with singleton gestation and it is used to differentiate between true and false labour for diagnosis of threatened preterm.

- **CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS:**

In our study, negative likelihood ratio of UCA was good at every trimester for the prediction of spontaneous preterm birth. This data implies that when a patient does not screen positive with an obtuse UCA measurement, it is highly unlikely that she will go on to have a spontaneous preterm birth and may not require additional cervical length monitoring. The results suggest that the uterocervical angle has a potential to be a reliable predictor of spontaneous preterm birth especially when measured in early trimester for early interventions. Detection rates may be improved if combined with other parameters such as maternal characteristics and obstetric history.

In our study, screening of transvaginal UCA measurement at every trimester yields approximately equal sensitivity, specificity, NPV and PPV. When measured along with routine ultrasound, UCA may serve as a better screening tool. When TVS UCA measurement is combined with CL measurement, stronger prediction of risk for spontaneous preterm birth can result.

A number of interventions have been proposed in an attempt to prevent preterm birth in women at high risk of preterm birth. Bed rest and hydration are often recommended, but there is no consistent evidence indicating that they are able to delay delivery.

Similarly, tocolytic medications are often prescribed, but again there are no reliable and consistent data to suggest that any tocolytic agent can delay delivery for longer than 24-48 hrs. Recent guidelines recommend tocolytic use for 48 hours i.e only till administration of antenatal corticosteroids. Hence, only short-term use of tocolytic drugs is recommended in order to prolong pregnancy long enough for effective antenatal corticosteroids and other therapies to be administered. Various tocolytics available are calcium channel blockers like NIFEDIPINE, OXYTOCIN INHIBITOR LIKE ATOSIBAN, MAGNESIUM SULPHATE AND BETA 2 AGONISTS LIKE RITODRINE, ISOXUPRINE.

Cervical cerclage may be performed prophylactically in the first trimester when clinical history suggests a high risk for PTB, or when cervical resistance studies confirm low cervical resistance. Ultrasound indicated cerclage seems to be associated with a reduction in PTB in women with a previous PTB who are carrying singleton gestations and develop a short cervical length in the second trimester.

Progesterone is considered a key hormone for pregnancy maintenance and a decline of progesterone action is implicated in the onset of labour. If such a decline occurs, cervical shortening may occur, and this would predispose to preterm delivery.

Studies by Fonseca et al in 2009, Hassan et al in 2011 and Romero et al in 2012 all found that administration of vaginal progesterone in women with a sonographic shortened cervical length was associated with a significant reduction in the rate of spontaneous preterm birth. Previous evidence supports the recommendation of cerclage in patients with a prior preterm delivery and a short cervix and in high risk group. The use of progesterone in patients with a short cervix appears promising ,but consensus recommendation awaits further evidence and analysis.

Control of infections during pregnancy also played a great role in the prevention of preterm birth, as infections are responsible for 25-30% of preterm birth. Especially, urogenital infections were found to increase the risk of preterm birth.



## CONCLUSION

Preterm birth continues to be the one of the most serious reason for neonatal morbidity and mortality and may lead to disabilities in later life. The cause of preterm birth is multifactorial. It encompasses maternal risk factors such as race and parity that are not modifiable. However, it also includes clinical conditions, such as cervical insufficiency ,for which we may screen, intervene and initiate treatment.so, its prediction during antenatal period is very important for clinicians to plan monitoring and treatment.

Transvaginal ultrasonographic cervical length measurement in the second trimester is a safe and effective technique to predict increased risk of preterm delivery in high risk population.

Uterocervical angle have major impact on preterm birth and it was concluded that a wide uterocervical angle  $\geq 95$  and  $\geq 105$  degrees detected during any trimester was associated with an increased risk for spontaneous preterm birth  $< 37$  and  $< 34$  weeks, respectively.

The advantage of uterocervical angle is that its measurement in each trimester has also shown very good results in prediction of preterm labour. It can be measured at the time of routine antenatal ultrasound (ANOMALY SCAN, GROWTH SCAN) thus obviating the need for additional ultrasounds. This can lead to its application for the prediction of spontaneous preterm labour both in low and high risk population. Thus, it helps for early intervention and prevention of complications in preterm birth.

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**ANNEXURES PROFORMA**

**IMPACT OF UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE ON PRETERM BIRTH**

NAME: AGE: Op/Ip nbr: S.NO:

ADDRESS:

CONTACT NO:

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS : Class I/ II/ III/ IV/ V

EDUCATIONAL STATUS : HEIGHT:

WEIGHT:

BMI:

LMP:

EDD:

PARITY:

TRIMESTER:

MENSTRUAL HISTORY :

OBSTETRIC HISTORY :

PAST HISTORY :

FAMILY HISTORY :

PERSONAL HISTORY :

**GENERAL EXAMINATION:**

PALLOR :

EDEMA :

TEMPERATURE :

PULSE RATE :

BP :

**SYSTEMIC EXAMINATION:**

CVS :

RS :

P/A EXAMINATION: **RADIOLOGICAL MEASUREMENT:** UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE:

INTERVENTION IF NEEDED:

**GESTATIONAL AGE AT DELIVERY: BABY DETAILS:**

Sex: Weight: APGAR:

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>A</b>	ABORTION
<b>BMI</b>	BODY MASS INDEX
<b>B.WT</b>	BIRTHWEIGHT
<b>CL</b>	CERVICAL LENGTH
<b>GDM</b>	GESTATIONAL DIABETES MELLITUS
<b>GHTN</b>	GESTATIONAL HYPERTENSION
<b>GA</b>	GESTATIONAL AGE
<b>IOL</b>	INDUCTION OF LABOR
<b>LSCS</b>	LOWER SEGMENT CESAREAN SECTION
<b>MSAF</b>	MECONIUM STAINED AMNIOTIC FLUID
<b>NVD</b>	NORMAL VAGINAL DELIVERY
<b>PTB</b>	PRETERM BIRTH
<b>PPROM</b>	PREMATURE PRETERMRUPTURE OF MEMBRANE
<b>PROM</b>	PRETERM RUPTURE OF MEMBRANE
<b>TVUS</b>	TRANSVAGINAL ULTRASOUND
<b>UCA</b>	UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE

## IEC APPROVAL LETTER



### GOVERNMENT STANLEY MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, CHENNAI -01

#### INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS COMMITTEE


TITLE OF THE WORK : "IMPACT OF UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE ON PRETERM BIRTH"  
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR : DR.R.THILAGA,  
DESIGNATION : PG IN OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY,  
DEPARTMENT : DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY,  
GOVT. STANLEY MEDICAL COLLEGE.

The request for an approval from the Institutional Ethical Committee (IEC) was considered on the IEC meeting held on 03.11.2020 at the Council Hall, Stanley Medical College, Chennai-1 at 10am.

The members of the Committee, the secretary and the Chairman are pleased to approve the proposed work mentioned above, submitted by the principal investigator.

The Principal investigator and their team are directed to adhere to the guidelines given below:

1. You should inform the IEC in case of changes in study procedure, site investigator investigation or guide or any other changes.
2. You should not deviate from the area of the work for which you applied for ethical clearance.
3. You should inform the IEC immediately, in case of any adverse events or serious adverse reaction.
4. You should abide to the rules and regulation of the institution(s).
5. You should complete the work within the specified period and if any extension of time is required, you should apply for permission again and do the work.
6. You should submit the summary of the work to the ethical committee on completion of the work.

  
MEMBER SECRETARY,  
IEC, SMC, CHENNAI

## CONSENT FORM

**PATIENT NAME:**

**IP/OP NO.:**

**STUDY TITLE: IMPACT OF UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE ON PRETERM BIRTH**

I agree to participate in the study entitled and have been informed about the details of the study in my own language.

I have completely understood the details of the study.

I am aware of the possible risks and benefits, while taking part in the study.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any point of time and even then, I can receive the medical treatment as usual.

I understand that I will not get any money for taking part in the study.

I will not object if the results of this study are getting published in any medical journal, provided my personal identity is not revealed.

I know what I am supposed to do by taking part in this study and I assure that I would extend my full cooperation for this study

Name of the participant : Signature / Left thumb print:

Date :

Name of the investigator: Dr R.THILAGA

Signature of investigator :

Date :

## **PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET:**

### **Title of the study:**

STUDY THE IMPACT OF UTEROCERVICAL ANGLE ON PRETERM BIRTH.

we are conducting a study among patients attending DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY, Stanley medical college. The purpose of this study to know the impact of uterocervical angle on preterm birth.

We are selecting all singleton antenatal patient in second trimester and transvaginal ultrasonography was done to measure uterocervical angle and followed up in third trimester and throughout course of gestation, period of gestation at the time of delivery, neonatal outcome was measured. The privacy of the patients in the research will be maintained throughout the study. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide whether to participate in this study or withdraw at any time; your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled

### **Confidentiality:**

Utmost priority will be given to protect the privacy and confidentiality of your personal information. The collected information will not be shared with anyone not involved in the study and reporting will be done in aggregate form only

### **Voluntary participation:**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any time during the interview without any explanation. Refusal to participate will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There might be certain questions which you may not wish to answer. You can choose to decline answering these questions



