

NCUS Newsletter

Winter 2016

Editor's Note

Howdy, fellow sonographers! As we get into 2016 at full speed, NCUS is putting the final touches on this year's Spring Symposium to be held April 8-10 at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC. Visit NCUS.org to download the meeting brochure and to register. Remember to renew your Society membership if you haven't already to get greatly discounted conference rates. Early Bird rates are available until April 1, 2016. In addition, Embassy Suites is offering group rates to conference attendees.

Included in this newsletter is

- An interesting educational opportunity put forth by the North Carolina Preterm Birth Prevention Telehealth Network
- A link to our video recap of last year's symposium as well as surveys comments from attending members
- 2016 symposium details from NCUS president, Chris Mann

Look forward to seeing you all in April!
Hudson O'Keefe

President's Letter

Hello fellow Society members! I hope you had a wonderful and safe holiday season! It's that time of year again to get yourself registered and ready for another educational extravaganza as the 35th Annual Spring Symposium is fast approaching. As always, I'm confident that you will find many lectures that will fit your everyday practice and get that CME fix you've been needing.

To kick things off on Saturday, our Keynote Speaker, Dr. Kisslo from Duke University, will be entertaining and educating you about the history of medical ultrasound to date. We've brought back several of your favorites too, like Mani Montazemi and Dr. Braithwaite's Breast Boot Camp. There's no shortage of great speakers on the cardiac side of the house either!

Check out the brochure on the website to see all the speakers and lectures that we've been working hard to get. And let's not forget all the wonderful vendors with the latest and greatest they have to offer. Ultrasound technology is still progressing and there's no better way to stay in the know than being up close and personal with the leaders in Ultrasound equipment.

Winston Salem is a great city and we've enjoyed previous engaging symposiums at the Benton Convention Center. This year will be no exception and, with the meeting taking place in mid-April, the weather should provide plenty of extracurricular enjoyment. Mark your calendars for April 8-10 and be sure to join us there!

Sincerely,

Chris

Chris Mann, RDCS, FASE

President, NCUS

2015 NCUS Spring Symposium Video Recap

Last year's symposium was held in Wilmington, NC and members' survey comments included:

- "Good echo speakers, right heart eval, very pertinent topics"
- "The speakers were so much fun and informative"
- "Mani is engaging and so informative"
- "Location, speakers, and content were wonderful"
- "Quiz Bowl!"
- "Business meeting in the morning was great"
- "Great topics this year!"

To see our video slideshow from the event, click [here](#) or go to YouTube at NCUS - 34th Annual Medical Ultrasound Symposium Spring 2015

Cervical US Screening and Prevention of Preterm Birth

As a result of a sonographic cervical length assessment, providers may determine that interventions for the prevention of preterm birth should be used for their patients. In the last 15 years, cervical length (CL) measurement in the second trimester by transvaginal ultrasound (TVU) has been shown to be one of the most predictive risk factors of preterm birth¹ and can be used to identify high-risk patients with a short cervix that would benefit from preventive interventions. These interventions include the use of vaginal progesterone² and cerclage. Multiple randomized clinical trials have shown a significant risk reduction in preterm birth with vaginal progesterone therapy when used in high-risk patients. In addition, “data show that cervical cerclage is beneficial in prevention of preterm birth and in improving perinatal mortality and morbidity in a specific [high-risk] population.”³

“The utility of using cervical length to base therapeutic decisions may be limited by the quality of the ultrasound assessment.”⁴ Given the importance of the ultrasound assessment for cervical length measurement and decisions about patient care, training in performing this assessment is an opportunity for education and quality improvement in prematurity prevention. In one study on the implementation of a universal transvaginal cervical length screening program, all of the sonographers received training in cervical length measurement, and performed this measurement using this standardized method. Training on and implementing a standardized approach to the

¹ Berghella, MD, V. (2012). Universal Cervical Length Screening for Prediction and Prevention of Preterm Birth. *Obstetrical and Gynecological Survey*, 67(10), 653-657.

² Orzechowski MD MPH, K. M., Nicholas MD, S. S., Baxter MD MSCP, J. K., Weiner MD MLA, S., & Berghella MD, V. (2014). Implementation of a Universal Cervical Length Screening Program for the Prevention of Preterm Birth. *American Journal of Perinatology*, 31(12), 1057-1062.

³ Berghella MD, V., Rafael MD, T. J., Szychowski PhD, J. M., Rust MD, O. A., & Owen MD MSPH, J. (2011). Cerclage for Short Cervix on Ultrasonography in Women With Singleton Gestations and Previous Preterm Birth: A Meta-Analysis. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 117(3), 663-671.

⁴ Parry MD, S., & Elovitz MD, M. V. (2014). Pros and Cons of Maternal Cervical Length Screening to Identify Women at Risk of Spontaneous Preterm Delivery. *Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 57(3), 537-546.

ultrasound examination improves measurement accuracy, which should improve the effectiveness of screening and treating to prevent preterm birth.

CLEAR certification, a cervical ultrasound training program designed to improve prematurity screening, is available through the Perinatal Quality Foundation's Cervical Length Education and Review (CLEAR) Course and The Fetal Medicine Foundation's cervical assessment certificate of competence. Information on the Fetal Medicine Foundation's course is available on their website at <https://fetalmedicine.org/cervical-assessment-1>. Additional information on CLEAR certification through the Perinatal Quality Foundation is available through the organization's website: <https://clear.perinatalquality.org/>.

The goal of the North Carolina Preterm Birth Prevention TeleHealth Network is to improve birth outcomes in North Carolina by disseminating and implementing evidence-based strategies to prevent preterm birth. There are four primary strategies that will support achieving the goal of this project. Included in these is to increase the number of sonographers in North Carolina with CLEAR certification by providing financial support for this training through the Perinatal Quality Foundation. This course provides training in the accurate measurement of cervical length through three online lectures, an examination, and scored image review. This project will fund costs for CLEAR certification for 180 sonographers in North Carolina. Supporting certification for sonographers in underserved areas of the state will be the priority of the project, with opportunities for financial support for sonographers in other regions of North Carolina as available. If you are interested in this opportunity and would like to learn more, please contact Katherine Bryant at katherine_bryant@med.unc.edu or 919-962-7924 for more information.

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Parting Thought...

