Perinatal Outcomes in Patients with Autoimmune Diseases: from Population-Based Registers to Clinical Studies

Population-based registers have the potential to address numerous methodologic obstacles, however they themselves are not without limitations. In this talk, Dr. Simard will present work from a large Swedish register linkage on systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), a chronic inflammatory systemic autoimmune disease, to highlight both the strengths and weaknesses in the setting of maternal and fetal outcomes in SLE. In Sweden approximately 1 out of 1000 women in their childbearing years was living with an SLE diagnosis in 2010. Compared with the general population, pregnant women with SLE have significantly worse maternal and fetal outcomes, although little is known about the underlying mechanisms. For example, women with SLE experience more preeclampsia and preterm delivery, but few consider the degree to which these two are related as well as whether lupus nephritis is masquerading as preeclampsia. Clinical studies are underway to address the questions generated from register-based studies and the limitations such as lack of serologic data and unknown SLE phenotype.