EP 07.03 Fetal spine evaluation: different ways of looking at the spine

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Objectives: Screening the fetal spine is standard in second trimester ultrasound and part of the basic and extended neurosonography protocols. It is usually done with a 2D transabdominal probe. We investigated in which way a linear probe, a transvaginal probe and a 3D probe will perform in the investigation of the fetal spine.

Methods: 100 consecutive cases with a gestational age between 18 to 22 weeks were screened, mentioning where the method was possible to use and where there were extra benefits of using a certain method. The targets of the examination were the same as for the 2D convex probe: longitudinal image of the spine and position of the cord in the neural canal.

Results: We obtained good results with all probes, each showing some limitations and a different set of benefits. The different probes showed the results we expected based on previous experience with random using in normal and pathological cases.

Conclusion: Results show that, though none of them is perfect, each can help complete and improve standard examinations, improve diagnosis specificity and doctor-patient communication.