

## **Family Medicine Clerkship Plain Language Summary – Kyrsten Kelley**

**Title:** Tracking your twin pregnancy using ultrasound.

**Name:** Kyrsten Kelley

### **Plain Language Summary:**

When you find out that you are pregnant with twins, it becomes important for your doctor and care team to be able to measure and keep track of each baby. This is because they will want to make sure that each baby is growing correctly and has no problems. One way that medical teams can do this is through ultrasound. Ultrasound is a test that uses sound waves to create an image of your babies on a video screen. It is normally used several times during each pregnancy to look at the heart rate, sex, movements, and to measure the baby's head size, length, and other important things. One problem is that during twin pregnancies it can be difficult to keep track of which baby is which.

A recent study called "Systematic Labeling of Twin Pregnancies on Ultrasound" showed that the best way to label and track each twin using ultrasound is to label them as lateral (left/right) or vertical (top/bottom). This is done by deciding if the membrane (line that separates the babies) between the twins runs vertically or horizontally across the uterus. Once the twins are labeled as left/right or top/bottom then they can be tracked throughout the pregnancy more easily during ultrasound exams. In this study, the first ultrasound was done during weeks 11-14, and this is when each twin was labeled. Then the twins were tracked and recorded again at the 34-week ultrasound. At this ultrasound, they determined which baby they think will present first during birth and they document the sex of the twins prior to delivery. After delivery, they compared the birth order and the sex of each baby to the ones they found during ultrasound. The results showed that the twins may change their presenting order, but that the position of the twins based on vertical or horizontal does not change. This study is useful because it creates a way for doctors and care teams to track each twin and make sure that they are growing and developing properly using measurements with ultrasound.

The problem with this study is that it does not work for identical twins that share the same sac. This is because these types of twins do not have a membrane between the twins that can be used to track each one.

### **Additional Resources:**

Week by Week Twins Calendar – I am Pregnant.Com

<http://www.i-am-pregnant.com/Pregnancy/calendar/twins/4-8>

Twin Pregnancy: What multiples mean to mom – Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/twin-pregnancy/PR00120>

Tips for the Parents of Twins – Familydoctor.org

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/children/parents/infants/170.html>

### **Key Words:**

Twin pregnancy, Ultrasound, Imaging, Presenting Order, Inter-Twin Membrane

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