Ovarian function in classic galactosemia:
a research update from the Fridovich-Keil lab

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In this breakout session...

• What we know and what we don’t know about ovarian function in classic galactosemia.
  
new data shed light on:
• timing: when does the “problem” first begin? Is it consistent or does it wax and wane?
• biomarkers: what can we learn from AMH and FSH at different points in a girl’s life?
• predictors of outcome?

Want to hear more about clinical practice and options relating to puberty and fertility for girls and women with classic galactosemia?

Saturday 11:15am-12:15pm:
POI and fertility in galactosemia, with
• Dr. Jen Badik (a pediatric endocrinologist) and
• Dr. Jessica Spencer (a fertility specialist)

What do we know?

• >80% of girls and women with classic galactosemia experience premature ovarian insufficiency (POI).
• For some girls the defect is PRIMARY, meaning they need exogenous hormones to enter or complete puberty.
• For other girls and women the defect is SECONDARY, meaning they achieve spontaneous puberty, but then stop cycling before age 40, sometimes before age 20.

What do we NOT know?

• For those GG girls and women who will experience POI, at what age do their ovaries become functionally different?
• Is the difference permanent or does it wax and wane?
• What factors distinguish the 10-20% who demonstrate apparently normal ovarian function as young women from the >80% who do not?
• Mechanism?

How Healthy Ovaries Work

Hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian (HPO) axis
birth to ~18 months active
18 months to peri-puberty inactive
peri-puberty and beyond active

modified from R. Sanders
What is a follicle?

How many follicles are in an ovary?

How can we assess ovarian status NONINVASIVELY?

- monitor relevant hormone levels in the blood (e.g. estradiol, FSH, AMH)
- ultrasound to measure ovarian size and to count the antral follicles (big enough to see by ultrasound)

Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH)

Anti-Müllerian Hormone (AMH)
(aka Müllerian Inhibiting Substance, MIS)

- expressed at VERY HIGH levels in prenatal and postnatal boys
- prevents development of female “plumbing”
- expressed in primary, preantral, and early antral follicles
- serum levels are relatively high in young girls and women, and decline over time as a woman approaches menopause

Serum anti-Müllerian Hormone (AMH, pmol/L) in 926 healthy infants, girls, and women in Denmark
FSH vs. AMH

FSH
- Unreliable in very young girls
- Varies through the menstrual cycle
- Varies in response to hormone therapy

AMH
- Reliable at all ages beyond about 2 months
- Unaffected by menstrual cycle
- Unaffected by hormone therapy

FSH in GGs and controls

AMH in GGs and controls

Antral follicle count by age

So... what have we seen?
- >80% of GG girls have unusually low AMH, even as infants
- AMH levels in the low range tend to stay low; AMH levels in the normal range sometimes stay normal and sometimes decrease
- the HPO axis seems to remain active in some GG girls much longer than in controls (e.g. elevated FSH in a 4 year old)
- antral follicle counts (and ovarian volumes) in most GG girls are unusually low

Is predicted residual GALT activity a predictor of outcome?

Some GALT alleles with residual activity detected in yeast
- S135L
- D136H
- D98N
- D197G

Some GALT alleles with no residual activity detected in yeast
- L195P
- P183T
- A78T
- Y209C
- Q188R
- F171S
- D98H
- Q206R
- M142K
- 5kb del

Gleason et al. in preparation
What does this tell us about mechanism, and what does it mean for girls and women with classic galactosemia?

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