

Abstract

OBJECTIVES: To assess the diagnostic value of prenatal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) in addition to prenatal ultrasound in a case of fetal varicella syndrome. **METHODS:** Comparison of prenatal ultrasound and MRI features obtained at 26 and 32 weeks, respectively, with neonatal imaging (ultrasound, MRI and CT) and macroscopic and microscopic pathology findings in a fatal case of varicella embryopathy. **RESULTS:** Prenatal ultrasound correlated fairly well with neonatal imaging and pathology findings. Most lesions of thoracic, abdominal and retroperitoneal viscera, limb involvement and even dermatologic features were apparent on ultrasonography. Involvement of the CNS, including cerebellar hypoplasia, was not apparent on ultrasound examination, but was clearly demonstrated by prenatal MRI. **CONCLUSION:** If maternal seroconversion for the varicella-zoster virus is suspected, combining prenatal ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging may document the extent of tissue damage in fetal varicella syndrome to a larger extent than has been reported until now and therefore contribute to due counselling following maternal varicella exposure.