

Air embolism in obstetrics

Air embolism in obstetrics can be encountered both **in vaginal births** and **in caesarean sections** . In caesarean sections, which are performed under general anesthesia, we find an incidence of up to 97%. Most of these emboli have a subclinical course.

Symptoms

Massive air embolism in obstetrics ⇒ hypotension and hypoxemia ⇒ cardiac arrest.

The most common symptoms :

- pain in the chest
- decrease in blood oxygen saturation (SpO₂)
- dyspnoea.

Pathophysiology

Factors increasing the occurrence of air embolism:

- the pressure gradient between the heart and the operative field is equal to -5cmH₂O
- low central venous pressure.

Amount of air penetration into the vascular bed	Result
Higher volume	Fatal right ventricular outflow tract obstruction
Lower volume	hypoxemia, disturbances in the ratio of ventilation to perfusion, hypotension, arrhythmia, right-sided heart failure

Links

Related articles

- Pregnancy
- Birth
- Caesarean section
- Air embolism

References

- PAŘÍZEK, Antonín, a kolektiv. *Kritické stavy v porodnictví*. 1. vydání edition. Praha : Mother- Care - Centrum Publishing, 2012. 285 pp. ISBN 978-80-7262-949-7.