



Implementation of a Fetal Demise Protocol at Yale New Haven Hospital

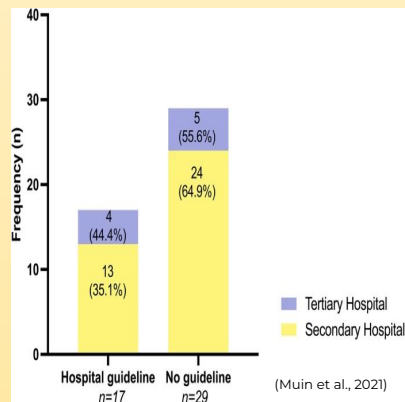


Bardio and Marchegiani: Protocol for Fetal Demise

Background

Fetal Death → the delivery of a fetus showing **no signs of life** as indicated by the absence of breathing, heartbeats, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movements of voluntary muscles (ACOG, 2020).

Stillbirth affects about **1 in 160** births, with **24,000 babies born stillborn** each year in the U.S. (CDC, 2020).



Only **36%** of hospitals have guidelines for maternal care after a stillbirth.

Including YNHH, **63%** did not have protocols in place (Muin et al., 2021).

Protocol

- Place a yellow butterfly symbol outside of a fetal demise patient's room.

This protocol will be used to **promote communication and awareness** of patients with fetal demise among the YNHH healthcare team through discreet imaging outside the patient's room.



Benefit

- All providers will be aware of the demise prior to entering the patient's room.

Our **focus** is to promote a safe and comfortable environment for our patients. Implementing this will advocate for our patients' emotional wellbeing to convey:

- Empathy**
- Compassion**
- Sensitivity**

Impact of a Fetal Demise on Both the Patient and the Nurse

Patient

Mothers who experience fetal demise usually feel strong forms of **grief**, including:

- Anger
- Sadness
- Trauma (Sinaga et al., 2020).

Nurse

Along with performing normal tasks to provide quality care, nurses of demise patients are left as the patients':

- "Therapist"
- Emotional support person (Zwerling et al., 2021).

Why a Yellow Butterfly?

The symbol of a butterfly is often interpreted as a "message that the deceased is okay and continues to live on in another realm." A yellow butterfly represents a message of hope to the family of the infant. (Painter, n.d.).

Connection to Sacred Heart University's Core Values

"Commitment to excellence in all we do"

"Promotion of the common good of society"

At Sacred Heart University, our mission is to promote common good to all individuals, in all aspects of society. We are committed to excellence and by implementing this protocol at YNHH, we are reaching excellence and providing common good to our patients.

"What to Say to Someone Who Lost a Baby"

Scan the QR code to watch a video about the do's and don'ts when talking to someone who lost a baby



Alexis Bardio & Gabrielle Marchegiani

