

ECG features can predict peripartum cardiomyopathy

Researchers have found out for the first time from women who have recently delivered in Kano, Nigeria, that using three ECG disturbances could predict Peripartum Cardiomyopathy (PPCM) with 83.8% accuracy. PPCM is a disease that causes heart failure in nearly one-third of all cases in Kano, which occurs towards the end of pregnancy or shortly after delivery, with mortality as high as 30% in one year, as well as significant ill health that could also affect the well-being of their children. It tends to affect young and poor women in northern Nigeria, but also occurs in other parts of the world. The ECG (electrocardiogram) is a tool for examining the heart that is widely available and affordable, and its use is not associated with any ill health. Prior to this study, such patients have to be referred to highly skilled Doctors, who are too few in the locality, for confirmatory investigations.

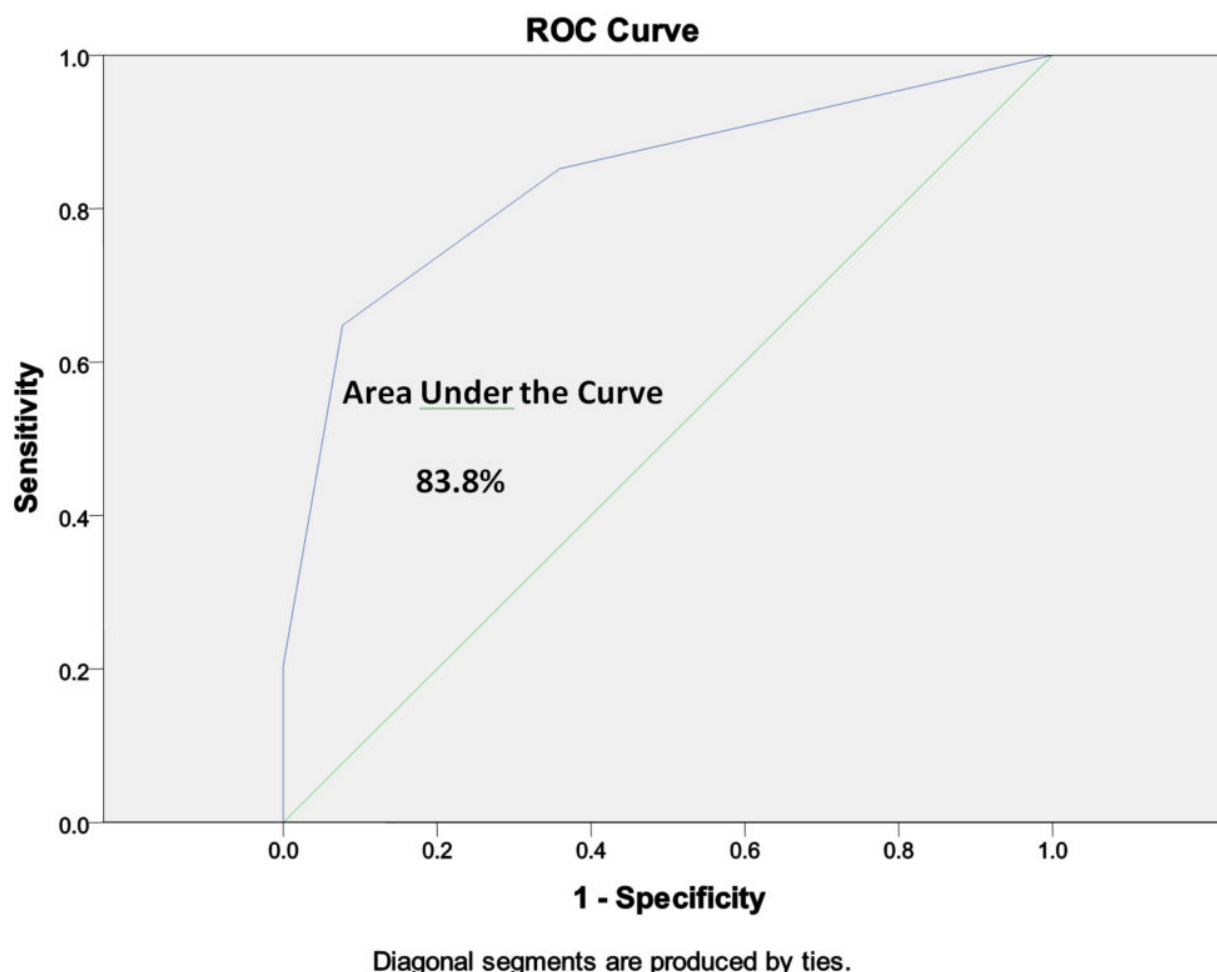


Fig. 1.

The researchers developed a scoring system for the ECG disturbances. They found that a risk score of 2 or higher, developed by scoring 1 for each of the three ECG disturbances (tachycardia, ST-T-wave abnormalities and QRS duration), had a sensitivity of 85.2%, specificity of 64.9%, negative predictive value of 86.2% and area under the curve of 83.8% (p less than 0.0001) for predicting PPCM. They therefore recommended that in postpartum women, using the risk score could help to streamline the diagnosis of PPCM with significant accuracy, prior to confirmatory investigations. This will allow life-saving treatments to be commenced as early as possible.

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Publication

[Electrocardiographic predictors of peripartum cardiomyopathy.](#)

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