

Rheumatic heart disease



Rheumatic heart disease is a medical condition which affects the heart whereby the entire heart gets damaged. It is associated with the rheumatic fever since most of its occurrence appear shortly after has had the fever. It mostly affects children and begins like a simple sore throat; later degenerating to strep throat (Pillitteri, 2009). When it is diagnosed early and left untreated, it eventually affects the valves of the heart whereby they are unable to open and close as they should.

The common symptoms of rheumatic heart disease include having high fever, having swollen and painful joints, occasional loss of breath or experience weak breath, the movement of limbs is uncontrolled and also rash in the skin. This disease is often confused with bone infection; thus it is necessary for the correct diagnosis to be done.

In pregnancy, there are many cardiovascular changes which occur to satisfy the increased demand for blood flow for the developing fetus since she is the only provider of nourishment (Neff & Spray 1996). There is increased plasma because of the increased aldosterone hormone. The output of the heart increases significantly, and due to the relaxed muscles due to increase in progesterone, there are chances of low blood pressure.

There is increased heart activity with heart output increasing by about 40% of its normal functions. It is therefore important to understand that this is the time when such a woman is expected have the blood-flow carefully checked and any symptoms which can be associated with cardiac disorder diagnosed early enough (Littleton & Engebretson 2002). Rheumatic heart disease is

associated with blockage of valves and it can be potentially dangerous when the woman is expectant.