

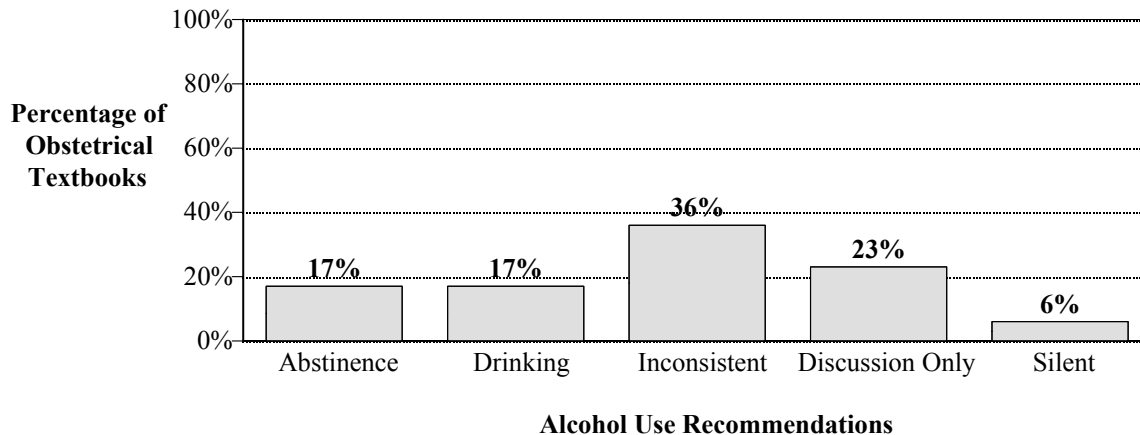
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Obstetrical Textbooks Unlikely to Recommend Alcohol Abstinence to Pregnant Women

Only 17% of obstetrical textbooks published over the last 4 decades consistently recommend that expectant mothers abstain from alcohol consumption, according to a 2001 study examining 81 obstetrical textbooks. The remainder of the textbooks examined stated that alcohol consumption was permissible in pregnant women (17%), provided conflicting statements about alcohol use during pregnancy (36%), presented literature on the topic without making a recommendation (23%), or did not address the issue at all (6%). Recent texts were slightly more likely to recommend abstinence—24% of those published since 1990 did so compared to 13% of those published in earlier years. According to the authors, “Those who teach medical students and residents should be aware of the recommendations in the textbooks that they or their trainees use. Trainees should refer to recommendations by national organizations and should supplement textbook reading with current journal articles” (p. 138).

Recommendations for Drinking During Pregnancy Found in Obstetrical Textbooks (N=81 textbooks published through 2000)



NOTE: Obstetrical textbooks were identified by using the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association—Selected List of Books and Journals for the Small Medical Library* (a list published biennially since 1965 to assist librarians in identifying key clinical textbooks and journals) and by canvassing the Virginia Commonwealth University’s Tompkins-McCaw Libraries for pertinent clinical obstetrical textbooks. Textbooks were reviewed by two independent reviewers.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Loop K. Q., Nettleman M. D., “Obstetrical Textbooks: Recommendations About Drinking During Pregnancy,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 23(2):136-138, 2002. For more information, contact Mary Nettleman at mnettleman@hsc.vcu.edu.