The symphysis-fundus height graph and fetal growth retardation: gimmick or useful clinical tool?

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Abstract: The author has used symphysis-fundus (S-F) height graphs in Botswana for many years. He describes his own successful experience with these graphs and reviews the work of others. The main use of the graphs has been in the recognition of intra-uterine growth retardation (IUGR), but the author points out their additional utility in other clinical contexts.
recognition of the abnormally large uterus (twins, large babies and hydramnios).

Kennedy discusses the reliability and limitations of S-F height measurement that it is sometimes difficult (e.g. in the obese), but this does not detract from its reliability and consistency in most pregnant women. He emphasizes the value of this approach in developing countries where more sophisticated methods of fetal growth assessment (e.g. ultrasound) are not available. He also describes how the graph can be used to assess gestational age.

[There is no doubt that S-F height graphs are a useful tool in the recognition of the abnormally small or too large uterus. The method can be used satisfactorily by health workers with limited formal education, provided they have been well trained and have clear guidelines on when and how to take action. Further, it is of course pointless to detect the poorly growing fetus if no facilities exist to offer special management to women carrying suspected growth-retarded babies.]

V. Jill Everett
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The mathematical theory of black holes, the headwaters are unpredictable.