Pennington Biomedical Research Center
Office Of Business Development & Commercialization

Fetal Growth Restriction Diagnostic

This invention is a diagnostic and potential treatment for fetal growth restriction (FGR) or intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR) which occurs when a fetus fails to grow to the appropriate size during pregnancy. This diagnostic determines the amount of FGF21 protein in the blood or plasma and allows recommendation of methods to lower FGR21 through targeted nutrient or polynucleotide therapy.

Traditional approaches such as fundal height (the size of the uterus across the abdomen) measurement and nutrient therapy have been unreliable in addressing this issue. Reducing circulating FGF21 can provide a more objective FGR measurement that can be monitored to determine if treatment is successful or needs adjustment.

Animal and human studies both showed that FGF21 was negatively correlated with fetal growth, infant growth, and infant head circumference. By providing a kit of molecular biomarkers for FGF21, this work can lower the risk of fetal mortality and reduce the instances of complications caused by early birth to both mother and child.

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