Raskauden ajan ultraaanitutkimukset ja seerumiseulonnat rakenne- ja kromosomipoikkeavuuksien tunnistamisessa [Maternal ultrasound and serum screening in the detection of structural and chromosomal abnormalities]

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Citation

Authors' objectives
This study examines maternal screening to detect foetal abnormalities. This report looks at the different screening models in the context of Finnish practice, and compares their implementation and results with a situation where no screening is performed. Furthermore, an expert group has analysed the ethical and social dimensions of screening. The report also deals with important factors affecting the quality management of screening organisations.

Authors' conclusions
For maternal screening to detect foetal abnormalities to be successful, its targets should be set clearly. The screening organisation should operate appropriately in terms of both timing and quality, ranging from the first screening test to informing the parents of the results and significance of further testing and of options available for them, and further to supporting the parents independent decision-making and offering any necessary further treatment. Mothers and families participating in screening for structural and chromosomal abnormalities should be informed of both the targets of the screening and the qualities of the screening method, any options available for them and any risks associated with the different screening stages. Parents should be allowed to make a conscious decision on a voluntary basis concerning their participation. Counselling on screening should be competent and consistent, and adequately available at each screening stage.

Our wish is that the research evidence and expert knowledge presented in this report will provide a basis for a fruitful health-policy discussion on the targets and implementation of foetal screening. Among the targets of screening for foetal abnormalities is to detect severe abnormalities reliably at such an early stage that the decision to terminate the pregnancy is possible; however, not all detected abnormalities are severe. Varying from one municipality to another, the present screening practices do not ensure equality. Accordingly, a uniform national screening system and improvements in the quality of screening should be set as target.

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