

Neonatal lupus is a rare condition that has occurred slightly more in female than male infants but is far less female gender dominant than systemic lupus erythematosus. Most symptoms of the disorder, except congenital heart block, are temporary (transient), usually resolving themselves within several months. The exact incidence is unknown, but congenital heart block is estimated to occur in 1 in 15,000 live births. In general, the heart block associated with maternal autoantibodies occurs in the absence of any structural abnormalities of the heart. The diagnosis depends of course on the manifestation. If during pregnancy, a fetal heart beat is found to be slow, then an echocardiogram is ordered. Echocardiography is an exam that uses reflected sound waves to create a picture of the heart and is required to assess the function of the heart and diagnose heart block. The mother should be immediately tested for anti-Ro and La antibodies. The diagnosis of the skin rash is based upon a thorough clinical evaluation. It may not always be necessary to test the infant for the antibodies as the mother's blood test tells the story.