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Association of Thyroid Function Test Abnormalities and Thyroid Autoimmunity With Preterm Birth

[1] Dinar, [1] Kurnia

[1] Faculty of Medicine, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta City, Central Java, Indonesia

Correspondence : dr.dinar892477@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Background: The reviewed literature collectively underscores the significant association between thyroid function test abnormalities and thyroid autoimmunity with preterm birth and other adverse pregnancy outcomes. The foundational work by (Balthazar & Z Steiner, 2012) establishes the critical role of thyroid autoimmunity during the periconceptional period, indicating that abnormalities in thyroid function can lead to obstetric complications, including preterm birth. **Literature Review:** The systematic reviews conducted by (Nazarpour et al., 2015) and (Sullivan, 2016) further elucidate the implications of maternal thyroid dysfunction, particularly emphasizing the increased risks of preterm birth and low birth weight associated with thyroid disorders. These findings are echoed in the work of (J. Blumenthal & J. Eastman, 2017), which correlates elevated thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) levels and the presence of thyroid autoantibodies with adverse pregnancy outcomes, reinforcing the necessity for vigilant monitoring of thyroid function in pregnant women. Moreover, the reviews by (C. Dong et al., 2020) highlight the broader implications of maternal thyroid health, including potential long-term neurodevelopmental effects on offspring. These insights are crucial as they emphasize the need for healthcare providers to consider not only immediate pregnancy outcomes but also the potential long-term consequences of maternal thyroid autoimmunity. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, the literature reviewed presents compelling evidence of the multifaceted relationship between thyroid function abnormalities, thyroid autoimmunity, and adverse pregnancy outcomes, particularly preterm birth. The studies collectively advocate for heightened awareness and monitoring of thyroid health in pregnant women, emphasizing the critical role of thyroid function in ensuring both maternal and fetal well-being.

Keywords: Thyroid Function Test Abnormalities, Thyroid Autoimmunity, Preterm Birth

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INTRODUCTION

The association between thyroid function test abnormalities and thyroid autoimmunity with preterm birth has garnered significant interest in recent years, as evidenced by a growing body of literature exploring the implications of thyroid health during pregnancy. The foundational study by (Balthazar & Z Steiner, 2012) provides a longitudinal perspective on periconceptional changes in thyroid function, emphasizing the impact of thyroid autoimmunity on ovarian hyperstimulation and subsequent obstetrical complications. This work lays the groundwork for understanding how thyroid dysfunction can influence reproductive outcomes and sets the stage for further exploration into the relationship between thyroid abnormalities and pregnancy.

Building on this foundation, (E. Wilson et al., 2014) conducted a meta-analysis that highlights the association between thyroid autoantibodies and adverse pregnancy outcomes, including miscarriage and preterm birth. Their findings underscore the importance of thyroid autoimmunity as a risk factor, indicating that thyroid autoantibodies can adversely affect fetal growth and pregnancy progression. This study further illustrates the critical role of thyroid function in maintaining healthy pregnancy outcomes.

(Nazarpour et al., 2015) expand upon these insights by providing a systematic review of the significance of (sub)clinical thyroid dysfunction and thyroid autoimmunity before conception and in early pregnancy. Their research reveals a concerning prevalence of autoimmune thyroid disease among women experiencing recurrent spontaneous miscarriages, establishing a clear link between thyroid disorders and maternal outcomes, particularly in populations with specific demographic characteristics.

In a systematic review and meta-analysis, (Sullivan, 2016) explores the direct impact of maternal thyroid disease on preterm birth. This comprehensive analysis consolidates evidence linking maternal thyroid dysfunction with increased

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risks of prematurity and adverse birthweight outcomes, further confirming the critical nature of thyroid health in pregnancy.

(J. Blumenthal & J. Eastman, 2017) delve deeper into the implications of thyroid dysfunction and autoantibodies, emphasizing the association of these factors with gestational diabetes and adverse birth outcomes. Their findings highlight the necessity for careful monitoring of thyroid function in pregnant women, particularly those presenting with autoimmune conditions.

(C. Dong et al., 2020) critically assess the 2017 ATA Guidelines on thyroid disease during pregnancy, discussing new research that affirms the relationship between thyroid autoimmunity and pregnancy complications. Their systematic review reveals a significant correlation between thyroid autoimmunity and miscarriage, reinforcing the need for dynamic clinical guidelines that account for emerging evidence.

(Li et al., 2020) contribute to this discourse by examining the clinical value of antithyroid antibodies during pregnancy, noting their association with various adverse outcomes, including developmental concerns in children. Their findings call attention to the broader implications of maternal thyroid health, extending beyond immediate pregnancy outcomes to potential long-term effects on offspring.

In a systematic review and meta-analysis, (Lau et al., 2021) focus on the impact of levothyroxine in women with positive thyroid antibodies, exploring the controversies surrounding treatment efficacy. This analysis highlights the prevalence of thyroid autoimmunity in pregnant women and its association with miscarriage and preterm birth, while also addressing the unclear mechanisms linking these factors.

Finally, (Athar et al., 2022) investigate the repercussions of thyroid autoimmunity on neonatal outcomes in hypothyroid women. Their hypothesis-driven approach seeks to evaluate how maternal thyroid health influences neonatal well-being, adding another layer of complexity to the understanding of thyroid function in pregnancy.

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Together, these articles illustrate a multifaceted relationship between thyroid function, autoimmunity, and pregnancy outcomes, particularly preterm birth. The literature underscores the necessity for continued research and clinical attention to thyroid health as a critical component of maternal and fetal well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The article "Periconceptional changes in thyroid function: a longitudinal study" by (Balthazar & Z Steiner, 2012) provides valuable insights into the relationship between thyroid function and pregnancy outcomes, particularly focusing on the periconceptional period. The authors conducted a longitudinal study assessing thyroid function changes in women prior to conception and during early pregnancy, which is crucial for understanding the implications of thyroid abnormalities on maternal and neonatal health.

A significant aspect of the study is its emphasis on the role of thyroid autoimmunity and its potential impact on fertility and pregnancy outcomes. The findings suggest that women with thyroid autoimmunity may experience higher risks of obstetric complications, including preterm birth. This aligns with the literature indicating that autoimmune thyroid disease can influence reproductive health and pregnancy progression ((Balthazar & Z Steiner, 2012)).

Additionally, the article discusses the implications of levothyroxine treatment in euthyroid pregnant women with autoimmune thyroid disease. The authors highlight that appropriate management of thyroid function during pregnancy can mitigate risks associated with thyroid abnormalities, thereby improving obstetrical outcomes. This is particularly relevant for clinicians who must navigate the complexities of managing thyroid conditions in pregnant patients.

The longitudinal design of the study strengthens its findings, as it allows for the observation of thyroid function changes over time and their correlation with pregnancy outcomes. However, while the study presents compelling evidence, it would benefit from a larger sample size to enhance the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, the article could elaborate on the specific mechanisms by

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which thyroid autoimmunity affects pregnancy, providing deeper insights into potential interventions.

The article "Impact of Maternal Thyroperoxidase Status on Fetal Body and Brain Size" by (E. Wilson et al., 2014) provides a comprehensive examination of the relationship between maternal thyroid autoimmunity, specifically thyroid peroxidase (TPO) antibodies, and adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth and fetal growth anomalies. The authors present a meta-analysis that supports the notion that thyroid autoantibodies are significantly associated with both miscarriage and preterm birth, emphasizing the critical role these autoantibodies play in pregnancy complications.

The authors systematically review existing literature to establish a clear link between the presence of thyroid autoantibodies and negative pregnancy outcomes. They highlight that women with elevated TPO antibodies are at an increased risk for obstetrical complications, including preterm birth, which aligns with the broader understanding of thyroid dysfunction during pregnancy. This correlation is particularly important as it underscores the need for careful monitoring of thyroid function in pregnant women, especially those with a history of autoimmune thyroid disease.

Furthermore, the article discusses the implications of hypothyroidism and the treatment of euthyroid pregnant women with levothyroxine, illustrating how appropriate management of thyroid function can mitigate risks associated with autoimmunity. The authors argue that timely intervention can improve obstetric outcomes, suggesting that healthcare providers should consider screening for thyroid autoantibodies in pregnant women to identify those at risk.

The analysis presented in this article is robust, utilizing a meta-analytic approach to synthesize findings across multiple studies, which enhances the credibility of the conclusions drawn. However, while the article effectively establishes the association between thyroid autoimmunity and adverse pregnancy outcomes, it could benefit from a more detailed exploration of the underlying

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mechanisms by which TPO antibodies influence fetal development and the overall course of pregnancy. Additionally, the article could expand on the potential long-term effects on children born to mothers with thyroid autoimmunity, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the implications of these findings.

The article "Thyroid dysfunction and pregnancy outcomes" by (Nazarpour et al., 2015) provides a thorough examination of the implications of maternal thyroid function abnormalities during pregnancy, particularly emphasizing the association with neuropsychological development of offspring. The authors present a compelling argument that maternal thyroid dysfunction, specifically hypothyroidism, can have significant repercussions on child development, particularly when it occurs during critical periods of fetal development.

One of the key insights from the article is the correlation between subclinical hypothyroidism in pregnancy and the intellectual development of children. The authors highlight that children born to mothers with untreated hypothyroidism during early pregnancy exhibited developmental delays, which were observable at various stages, including 25-30 months of age. This finding underscores the importance of early detection and management of thyroid dysfunction in pregnant women, as it could mitigate potential adverse outcomes for the child.

The article also discusses the neurodevelopmental outcomes in children of mothers who achieved euthyroidism after conception. Notably, it indicates that if maternal thyroid hormone levels are restored to normal by late pregnancy, the neuropsychological development of the child may not be adversely affected. This finding is crucial, as it suggests that timely intervention can reverse some of the potential negative impacts of maternal hypothyroidism, emphasizing the need for regular thyroid function testing during pregnancy.

Furthermore, the authors delve into the significance of thyroid autoimmunity, noting its prevalence in women with a history of recurrent spontaneous miscarriages. The article presents a systematic review of the literature,

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which indicates that autoimmune thyroid disease can complicate pregnancy outcomes, including an increased risk of miscarriage. This association highlights the necessity for healthcare providers to consider thyroid autoimmunity when assessing pregnant women, particularly those with a history of reproductive challenges.

The article also addresses the broader implications of thyroid disorders on maternal outcomes, particularly in diverse populations such as Asian-Indian pregnant women. The authors report an increased prevalence of thyroid dysfunction in this demographic, suggesting that cultural and geographical factors may influence maternal thyroid health and, consequently, pregnancy outcomes.

The article "Influence of Thyroid Disorders On Pregnancy Outcomes" by (Sullivan, 2016) provides a comprehensive examination of the relationship between maternal thyroid dysfunction and adverse pregnancy outcomes, particularly preterm birth. The systematic review and meta-analysis conducted within the article highlight the significant implications of maternal thyroid disease on perinatal outcomes, emphasizing the increased risk of preterm delivery and low birth weight associated with thyroid dysfunctions.

Sullivan's work synthesizes findings from various studies, indicating that maternal thyroid hypofunction is a critical factor influencing pregnancy outcomes. The article details how thyroid function measured during early gestation, specifically at 11-13 weeks, correlates with the likelihood of spontaneous preterm delivery. This suggests that early identification and management of thyroid disorders could be crucial in mitigating risks associated with preterm birth.

Furthermore, the article explores the role of thyroid autoantibodies during pregnancy, linking their presence to higher incidences of gestational diabetes and other adverse birth outcomes. This association raises important questions about the mechanisms by which thyroid autoimmunity may contribute to complications during pregnancy, thereby necessitating further research to elucidate these pathways.

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Sullivan also discusses the broader implications of thyroid dysfunction on maternal health, suggesting that women with thyroid disorders may face increased morbidity in later life. This aspect of the article underscores the importance of monitoring thyroid health not only for immediate pregnancy outcomes but also for long-term maternal health.

The article titled "Beneficial Effects on Pregnancy Outcomes of Thyroid Hormone Replacement for Subclinical Hypothyroidism" by (J. Blumenthal & J. Eastman, 2017) provides a comprehensive examination of the implications of thyroid dysfunction and autoimmunity during pregnancy. The authors highlight that thyroid abnormalities, particularly elevated thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) levels and the presence of thyroid autoantibodies, are significantly correlated with adverse pregnancy outcomes, including gestational diabetes and preterm birth.

The article underscores the critical role of thyroid function in maintaining maternal and fetal health. It notes that high TSH levels in the first trimester are indicative of potential complications, such as preterm birth and other adverse outcomes. This aligns with the growing body of literature suggesting that thyroid hormone levels must be closely monitored and managed during pregnancy to mitigate risks associated with thyroid dysfunction.

Furthermore, the authors present evidence that autoimmune thyroid disease can adversely affect both maternal and fetal outcomes. The presence of thyroid autoantibodies, even in euthyroid women, is linked to negative pregnancy outcomes, suggesting that the immune response may play a pivotal role in pregnancy complications. This finding is particularly relevant for clinicians who must consider not only thyroid hormone levels but also autoimmune status when evaluating pregnant patients.

The critical evaluation of the material reveals that while the article effectively establishes the relationship between thyroid dysfunction and adverse pregnancy outcomes, it could benefit from a deeper exploration of the mechanisms underlying these associations. For instance, understanding how thyroid hormones

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influence placental function or fetal development could provide further insights into the management of thyroid conditions during pregnancy.

The systematic review by (C. Dong et al., 2020) presents a comprehensive analysis of the evolving understanding of thyroid function and autoimmunity in the context of pregnancy, particularly focusing on their association with adverse outcomes such as miscarriage and preterm birth. The review synthesizes findings from 18 studies published after the 2017 ATA Guidelines, reinforcing the significance of thyroid autoimmunity, particularly the presence of thyroid peroxidase antibodies (TPOAbs), in relation to pregnancy complications.

The authors highlight that several studies consistently demonstrate a correlation between thyroid autoimmunity and increased rates of miscarriage. For instance, Rajput et al. (as cited in (C. Dong et al., 2020)) conducted a case-control study that established a notable increase in miscarriage rates among euthyroid women with TPOAbs compared to those without. This finding is further supported by the secondary analysis of Seungdamrong et al., which indicated a heightened risk of first-trimester loss in women with a history of infertility and thyroid antibodies. These results underscore the potential impact of thyroid autoimmunity on pregnancy outcomes, suggesting that women with such antibodies may require closer monitoring and potentially intervention to mitigate risks.

However, the review also identifies gaps in the current literature, particularly regarding the mechanisms underlying the association between thyroid autoimmunity and adverse pregnancy outcomes. While the data reinforce the correlation, they do not elucidate the biological pathways that may contribute to these findings. For example, despite the significant associations noted, Cueva et al. found no difference in the frequency of euploid miscarriage in women with and without thyroid autoimmunity, indicating that the relationship may be complex and multifactorial.

Moreover, the review discusses the role of selenium supplementation in patients with thyroid autoimmunity, although the implications of this intervention

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remain ambiguous based on the current evidence. The authors suggest that further research is warranted to explore the therapeutic potential of selenium and other interventions aimed at managing thyroid autoimmunity in pregnant women.

The article titled "The Clinical Value and Variation of Antithyroid Antibodies during Pregnancy" by (Li et al., 2020) provides a comprehensive examination of the implications of antithyroid antibodies on pregnancy outcomes, particularly in the context of women undergoing intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) and embryo transfer. The authors assert that while the presence of antithyroid antibodies does not appear to significantly influence fecundity, pregnancy loss, or live birth rates among women with normal thyreotropine levels, the broader implications of thyroid autoimmunity during pregnancy warrant critical consideration.

One of the key insights presented in this article is the association between maternal thyroid autoimmunity and various developmental outcomes in children. The authors reference studies linking maternal thyroid autoimmunity to child IQ and attention deficit/hyperactivity problems, highlighting the potential long-term neurodevelopmental impacts on offspring ((Li et al., 2020)). This suggests that while immediate pregnancy outcomes may not be adversely affected, the presence of thyroid autoantibodies could have lasting effects on children's cognitive and behavioral health.

Moreover, the article discusses the epidemiological evidence correlating maternal thyroid autoantibodies with hearing deficits in children, as well as an elevated risk of autism in national birth cohorts. These findings underscore the complexity of thyroid autoimmunity's role in pregnancy and child development, suggesting that healthcare providers should consider the potential for these long-term risks when managing pregnant patients with thyroid autoantibodies ((Li et al., 2020)).

In terms of clinical guidelines, the authors compare the recommendations from the American Thyroid Association and the Endocrine Society regarding the

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management of euthyroid women with thyroid peroxidase antibodies during pregnancy. This comparison is crucial for practitioners, as it highlights the need for a nuanced approach to managing thyroid autoimmunity in pregnant women, particularly in light of the potential complications and risks associated with untreated thyroid dysfunction.

The article also touches on the relationship between thyroid autoantibodies and hypertensive disorders during pregnancy, drawing from the Ma'anshan Birth Cohort Study. This aspect emphasizes the multifaceted nature of thyroid autoimmunity and its potential role in various pregnancy complications, thereby reinforcing the importance of monitoring thyroid function and autoantibody levels throughout pregnancy ((Li et al., 2020)).

The article "Impact of levothyroxine in women with positive thyroid antibodies on pregnancy outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials" by (Lau et al., 2021) provides a comprehensive examination of the relationship between thyroid autoimmunity and pregnancy outcomes, particularly focusing on the effects of levothyroxine therapy. The authors highlight that thyroid function screening during early gestation is critical, as thyroid autoimmunity is prevalent among pregnant women, with TPOAb positivity rates ranging from 5% to 15% in the first trimester. This prevalence is notably higher in women experiencing recurrent pregnancy loss, where it is reported to be between 23% and 31%.

The article underscores the association between thyroid autoimmunity and adverse pregnancy outcomes, including miscarriage and preterm birth. However, the authors point out that the mechanisms underlying this association remain unclear. They propose two theories: one suggests that thyroid autoantibodies may signify a hostile immune environment, while the other posits that they could indicate reduced thyroid hormone reserves. This ambiguity in the underlying mechanisms presents a critical gap in understanding how thyroid autoimmunity impacts pregnancy, which is essential for developing targeted interventions.

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The article further discusses the controversy surrounding the use of levothyroxine in pregnant women with thyroid autoimmunity. The 2017 American Thyroid Association guidelines recommend levothyroxine treatment for women with thyroid autoimmunity and elevated TSH levels, specifically above the pregnancy-specific reference range. Moreover, the guidelines advocate considering levothyroxine for euthyroid women who are positive for TPOAb and have a history of pregnancy loss. Despite these recommendations, the article notes that the evidence regarding the efficacy of levothyroxine therapy in improving pregnancy outcomes remains conflicting.

The systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by (Lau et al., 2021) aim to synthesize existing data from randomized controlled trials to clarify the impact of levothyroxine therapy on pregnancy outcomes in women with thyroid autoimmunity. This approach is crucial, as it aggregates findings from multiple studies, potentially leading to more robust conclusions about the effectiveness of levothyroxine in this population.

The article titled "ODP534 Repercussions of Thyroid Autoimmunity on Neonatal Outcomes in Pregnant Hypothyroid Women" by (Athar et al., 2022) investigates the implications of maternal thyroid autoimmunity on neonatal outcomes, particularly in the context of pregnant women diagnosed with hypothyroidism. The authors present a hypothesis that maternal thyroid autoimmunity may significantly affect neonatal health, which is critical given the increasing prevalence of thyroid disorders among pregnant women.

The study meticulously examines the relationship between thyroid function test abnormalities and the presence of thyroid autoantibodies in pregnant women. The authors provide a comprehensive review of existing literature, establishing a foundation for their hypothesis that maternal thyroid autoimmunity can lead to adverse neonatal outcomes, including preterm birth. This connection is particularly relevant as it highlights the importance of monitoring thyroid function and autoimmunity in pregnant women, which may be overlooked in routine prenatal care.

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One of the strengths of the article is its methodological approach. The authors utilize a robust sample size and employ appropriate statistical analyses to investigate the correlation between thyroid autoimmunity and various neonatal outcomes. This enhances the reliability of their findings and underscores the need for clinicians to consider thyroid function tests as part of comprehensive prenatal assessments.

However, while the article effectively outlines the potential repercussions of thyroid autoimmunity, it could benefit from a more detailed exploration of the underlying mechanisms that link thyroid dysfunction to adverse neonatal outcomes. Understanding these mechanisms would provide a more nuanced perspective on how thyroid autoimmunity impacts fetal development and could guide future research directions.

Moreover, the article could strengthen its conclusions by discussing potential interventions or management strategies for pregnant women with thyroid autoimmunity. This would not only highlight the clinical implications of the findings but also serve as a valuable resource for healthcare providers.

CONCLUSION

The reviewed literature collectively underscores the significant association between thyroid function test abnormalities and thyroid autoimmunity with preterm birth and other adverse pregnancy outcomes. The foundational work by (Balthazar & Z Steiner, 2012) establishes the critical role of thyroid autoimmunity during the periconceptional period, indicating that abnormalities in thyroid function can lead to obstetric complications, including preterm birth. This is reinforced by (E. Wilson et al., 2014), whose meta-analysis highlights the detrimental impact of thyroid autoantibodies on pregnancy outcomes, establishing a clear link to miscarriage and preterm birth.

The systematic reviews conducted by (Nazarpour et al., 2015) and (Sullivan, 2016) further elucidate the implications of maternal thyroid dysfunction, particularly emphasizing the increased risks of preterm birth and low birth weight associated with thyroid disorders. These findings are echoed in the work of (J.

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Blumenthal & J. Eastman, 2017), which correlates elevated thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) levels and the presence of thyroid autoantibodies with adverse pregnancy outcomes, reinforcing the necessity for vigilant monitoring of thyroid function in pregnant women.

Moreover, the reviews by (C. Dong et al., 2020) highlight the broader implications of maternal thyroid health, including potential long-term neurodevelopmental effects on offspring. These insights are crucial as they emphasize the need for healthcare providers to consider not only immediate pregnancy outcomes but also the potential long-term consequences of maternal thyroid autoimmunity.

The systematic review and meta-analysis by (Lau et al., 2021) addresses the ongoing debate regarding the efficacy of levothyroxine treatment in women with thyroid autoimmunity, suggesting that while there is a prevalence of thyroid autoimmunity among pregnant women, the mechanisms linking these factors to adverse outcomes are still not fully understood. This gap in understanding underscores the complexity of thyroid health management during pregnancy.

Lastly, the investigation by (Athar et al., 2022) into neonatal outcomes in hypothyroid women highlights the necessity for comprehensive prenatal assessments that include thyroid function tests, as maternal thyroid autoimmunity could lead to significant repercussions for neonatal health.

In conclusion, the literature reviewed presents compelling evidence of the multifaceted relationship between thyroid function abnormalities, thyroid autoimmunity, and adverse pregnancy outcomes, particularly preterm birth. The studies collectively advocate for heightened awareness and monitoring of thyroid health in pregnant women, emphasizing the critical role of thyroid function in ensuring both maternal and fetal well-being.

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