Medical Xpress

Low birth weight and preeclampsia tend to reoccur in the next generation

February 2 2015

In a study to be presented on Feb. 6 in an oral concurrent session at the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine's annual meeting, The Pregnancy Meeting, in San Diego, researchers will present findings on a study of mothers and daughters where low birth weight and preeclampsia were found to reoccur in the next generation.

Preeclampsia is a pregnancy condition marked by high blood pressure and can include high concentrations of proteins in the urine which can lead to organ damage. If untreated, preeclampsia can lead to eclampsia which is a life threatening occurrence of seizures during pregnancy. Preeclampsia is associated with multiple maternal and fetal adverse effects. Researchers have not been able to identify cause or how to predict the condition. This study provides insight into an association between low birth weight and preeclampsia in multi generations.

The study, titled Like Mother, Like Daughter—Low Birth Weight and Preeclampsia Tend to Reoccur at the Next Generation looked at the perinatal information of 2314 triads of mothers and daughters giving birth in a medical center between the years of 1991-2012. Grandchildren were included in the same database. The study looked at 1493 mothers, 1619 daughters and 2314 grandchildren. Low birth weight in mothers, adjusting for maternal age, placental pathology, preeclampsia and parity, was found a significant predictor for low birth weight in offspring. Likewise, preeclampsia was also noted as a significant intergenerational factor following adjustments for maternal age, and parity.

"Pregnant women with maternal family history of low birth weight or preeclampsia should be informed regarding these outcomes and should be monitored more closely," stated Yehonatan Sherf, M.D. , one of the researchers of the study who is also presenting the findings at the SMFM annual meeting. The study was performed at the Soroka University Medical Center, Beer-Sheva, Israel.

Careful surveillance among high-risk pregnancies may be helpful in early detection of complications such as preeclampsia as well as neonatal low birth weight.

Provided by Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine

Citation: Low birth weight and preeclampsia tend to reoccur in the next generation (2015, February 2) retrieved 12 October 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-02-birth-weight-preeclampsia-tend-reoccur.html

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