

Anxious pregnant mothers more likely to have smaller babies

October 27 2009

A new study published in the journal *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology* reveals that anxiety in pregnant women impacts their babies' size and gestational age. Specifically, women with more severe and chronic anxiety during pregnancy are more likely to have affected babies.

Shahla M. Hosseini, Minhnoi W. Biglan, Cynthia Larkby, Maria M. Brooks, Michael B. Gorin, and Nancy L. Day studied a sample of low-income women, half of whom were African American and the other half Caucasian. The group already had well-known risk factors such as alcohol and cigarette use. The authors demonstrated that the mother's [anxiety](#) during [pregnancy](#) impacts birth outcomes over and beyond factors such as drug use, education, and race.

Anxiety during the third trimester predicted women delivering significantly smaller [babies](#). In the first and second trimesters, the effects of anxiety were significant only among those women who had severe anxiety.

Low to moderate levels of anxiety in women during either the first or second trimester did not significantly affect the birth outcomes, but [women](#) who are severely anxious during much of their pregnancy should be considered for anxiety-reducing interventions.

"One way to prevent health problems in children and adults is to focus care on the prenatal period," the authors note. "It is key to pursue further

research which addresses interventions to ameliorate the effects that a woman's trait anxiety has on the development of fetuses."

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Anxious pregnant mothers more likely to have smaller babies (2009, October 27)
retrieved 5 May 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-10-anxious-pregnant-mothers-smaller-babies.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.