

In pregnancy, a large waistline and high triglycerides: Early screen for gestational diabetes

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A large waistline and high triglyceride levels in pregnant women could be an early screening tool for gestational diabetes, according to a study published in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

Gestational diabetes is a significant public health concern, with potential negative effects on women and their babies, yet tests to diagnose are costly, time-consuming and unpleasant for pregnant women. As well, results are not available until relatively late in [pregnancy](#), at about six months. Previous studies have shown that obesity before pregnancy is linked to an increased risk of [gestational diabetes](#). There is a need for early, simple screening tools, especially with the trend of increasing obesity around the world.

In a study of 144 French-Canadian women under age 40 from Chicoutimi Hospital in Quebec, Canada, researchers found that an increased waistline and high triglyceride levels were linked to higher glucose intolerance levels in later pregnancy. Nineteen of the women had a previous history of gestational diabetes and 143 of 144 had a normal fasting glucose in their first trimester.

"We found that the simultaneous presence of abdominal obesity and hypertriglyceridemia in the first trimester is associated with a significantly increased risk of glucose intolerance later in pregnancy," writes Dr. Diane Brisson, Université de Montréal and Chicoutimi

Hospital with coauthors.

They note that the sample size was modest and homogenous but suggest further research with larger, more diverse populations.

"Measurement of waist girth in combination with triglyceride concentrations in the first trimester of pregnancy may be useful in the improvement of early screening for gestational diabetes," conclude the authors.

More information: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/doi/10.1503/cmaj.100378

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