

Research connects pregnancy loss and cardiovascular disease

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The Annals of Family Medicine published an article detailing research showing that women with a history of pregnancy loss are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease later in adulthood than other women, work completed by physicians in the Center for Primary Care and Prevention (CPCP) at Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island.

The article "Risk of Cardiovascular Disease Among Postmenopausal Women with Prior Pregnancy Loss: The Women's Health Initiative" stems from the analysis of data from the maternity experiences of a sample of 77,701 women, according to Donna Parker, ScD, director for community health and research with the CPCP. Of those, 30.3 percent reported a history of miscarriage, 2.2 percent a history of stillbirth, and 2.2 percent a history of both.

"We found that the adjusted odds for coronary heart disease in women who had one or more stillbirths was 1.27 (95 percent confidence interval (CI), which is a measure of reliability, 1.07-1.51) compared with women who had no stillbirths," Dr. Parker says. "For women with a history of one miscarriage, the odds ratio was 1.19 (95 percent CI, 1.08-1.32). For women with a history of two or more miscarriages, the odds ratio was 1.18 (95 percent CI, 1.04-1.34) compared with no miscarriage."

The researchers found no significant association of ischemic stroke and pregnancy loss, she adds. The association between pregnancy loss and coronary heart disease appeared to be independent of hypertension, [body mass index](#), waist-to-hip ratio and white blood cell count.

"These findings contribute to the growing body of evidence that the metabolic, hormonal and hemostatic pathway alterations that are associated with a [pregnancy loss](#) may contribute to the development of [coronary heart disease](#) in adulthood," Dr. Parker continues.

Women with a history of [miscarriage](#) or a single stillbirth should be closely monitored and receive early intervention from their primary care physician so risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol, obesity, smoking and diet can be closely monitored and controlled.

Provided by Women & Infants Hospital

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