Medical Xpress

Obese grandmothers increase risk for children

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Being healthy during pregnancy will affect grandchildren

The grandchildren of obese women face a heightened risk of being born and raised to a life of obesity, University of Queensland researchers have found.

UQ's School of Public Health researcher Associate Professor Abdullah Mamun said he was investigating how grandparents' and parental health, lifestyle and socio-economic status may create a family legacy of obesity and its associated health problems.

"I am exploring whether pre-pregnancy, pregnancy and post-partum factors impact on the development of obesity for both mothers and their offspring," he said.

"The obesity of maternal grandmothers appears to have a greater impact on the obesity of grandchildren.

"As genetic and lifestyle factors are shared equally across maternal and paternal lines, the stronger association with the maternal grandmother may suggest that a pregnant woman's diet and her exposure to conditions such as gestational diabetes and high blood pressure may have an impact on not only her child but her grandchild."

According to the World Health Organization, the global prevalence of obesity has more than doubled since 1980 and most of the world's populations live in countries where overweight and obesity kills more people than underweight.

Statistics from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that more than 12 million people in Australia, or around 50 per cent of the population, are considered overweight or obese.

More information: www.globalweightmanagement.org/

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