

Higher risk of preterm delivery for women born preterm

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Until now, it was known that low birth weight increased the risk of preterm delivery. But what about babies whose weights are low but still normal for preemies born at this age? "Our findings are unequivocal. The simple fact of being born prematurely increases the risk of premature delivery," said Ariane Boivin, lead author of the study. She explained that, to get a clear picture, the research team isolated the factor "born preterm" from the factor "birth weight for gestational age." To do this, they analyzed data from a cohort of 7,405 Quebec women who were born preterm over a period of 19 years, from 1976 to 1995, and compared it to that of women born at term.

"Knowing that being born preterm is a risk factor for expectant mothers, obstetricians could inform their patients of the warning signs of premature labour, so they can be vigilant and respond quickly if contractions occur," said Dr. Nuyt. The perspective of prematurity prevention is also among the benefits raised by the researcher.

"Including [preterm birth](#) in the [risk factors](#) for pregnancy would also help to better target [women](#) most at risk when a preventive treatment becomes available," she added. Some of her colleagues at CHU Sainte-Justine are also working on developing drugs to prevent prematurity and thereby allow the fetus to continue to develop normally in the womb.

"Having established with certainty a link between preterm [birth](#) and [preterm delivery](#) encourages us to continue our work to better understand the underlying biological and genetic mechanisms, in order to develop treatments that could one day prevent premature labour from occurring," she concluded.

More information: The article "Risk for Preterm and Very Preterm Delivery in Women Who Were Born Preterm" was published online in the journal *Obstetrics and Gynecology* on April 7, 2015.

Provided by University of Montreal

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