

Increased risk of depression for mothers undergoing fertility treatment

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Women giving birth after undergoing fertility treatment face an increased risk of depression compared to women ending up not having a child following fertility treatment, according to new research from the University of Copenhagen. According to the researchers, this has key implications for fertility treatment in future.

Danish researchers are among the first worldwide to study the risk of developing a [clinical depression](#) for women undergoing [fertility treatment](#). The new study shows that women who give birth after receiving fertility treatment are five times more likely to develop depression compared to women who don't give birth.

"The new results are surprising because we had assumed it was actually quite the opposite. However, our study clearly shows that women who become mothers following fertility treatment have an [increased risk](#) of developing depression in the first six weeks after birth compared to

women who did not have a child. Our study has not looked at why the depression occurs, but other studies indicate that it could be caused by hormonal changes or mental factors, but we cannot say for sure. We did not find any correlation between the number of fertility treatments and the subsequent risk of depression," says one of the driving forces behind the study, Camilla Sandal Sejbaek, PhD, Department of Public Health, University of Copenhagen.

Important findings for future treatment

The new research is based on data from 41,000 Danish [women](#) who have undergone fertility treatment in which an egg is removed from the body and fertilised in a laboratory. The study is based on unique register information from fertility clinics in Denmark.

"Infertility affects one in four to six couples who are trying to conceive, and our research sheds light on a little-known field. By focusing on the link between having a child after undergoing fertility treatment and the risk of depression, our research can give professionals useful tools in the form of advice and how to handle a pregnancy before and after birth. In addition, the findings are important in relation to couples who are thinking about starting fertility treatment. "It can be a tough process, and our findings show there is not a greater risk of [depression](#) if the treatment is unsuccessful," says Associate Professor Lone Schmidt, MD, DMSci, PhD from the Department of Public Health, University of Copenhagen.

The findings have just been published in the international journal *ACTA Obstetricia et Gynecologica Scandinavica*.

More information: The findings have just been published in the international journal *ACTA Obstetricia et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, where they are highlighted in the monthly newsletter, and next week they

will be presented at the University of Copenhagen.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26234480

Provided by University of Copenhagen

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