

Women over 35 should be warned of new risk of complication during pregnancy

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New research has found that women who become pregnant over the age of 35 or women who are single are at greater risk of a serious life-threatening condition than their younger counterparts.

Researchers from the University of Aberdeen in collaboration with NHS Grampian, funded by the NHS Grampian Endowment Fund, THL Finland and Health department Malta found that [pregnant women](#) over the age of 35 were a third more at risk of [placental abruption](#)—a rare but serious condition in pregnancy where the placenta separates prematurely before the birth of the baby. This can lead to severe bleeding putting both the mother as well the baby's life at risk

The risk of this condition was also increased in [single women](#), pregnancies complicated with unexplained bleeding in pregnancy, placenta praevia and preeclampsia.

Dr. Sohinee Bhattacharya, who led the study in Aberdeen, explains: "In this study, we observed two pregnancies in the same woman—one with and one without placental abruption. This meant we could examine how the pregnancies differed in respect of some known risk factors for placental abruption.

"Using this type of design, we were able to look at the effects of some modifiable risk factors such as maternal age and weight, smoking, [social class](#) on the risk of placental abruption while keeping some other factors such as genetic susceptibility constant.

"The association of advanced maternal age especially above 35 years with increased risk of placental abruption was a new finding—no one has described this link before.

"So—taking this new association into account, it is important to counsel [women](#) above 35 years regarding the risks of adverse outcomes not just before conceiving their first pregnancy but also before their subsequent [pregnancy](#)."

Sheena Lonchay, operations manager from NHS Grampian Endowment

Fund, the leading health charity in Grampian added: "NHS Grampian Endowment Fund welcomed the opportunity to fund the University of Aberdeen's research project into placental abruption.

"This valuable work helps to retain Aberdeen's reputation as a centre of excellent health sciences research."

Provided by University of Aberdeen

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