

Does stress make it more difficult to become pregnant?

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New research in *Acta Obstetricia et Gynecologica Scandinavica* suggests that stress may affect a woman's fecundability, or her probability of achieving a pregnancy within a menstrual cycle.

The study assessed allostatic load, which refers to the cumulative "wear and tear" of chronic stress and life events, in 444 women who were trying to become pregnant. Women with higher allostatic load scores—based on nine indicators such as [blood pressure](#), blood sugar, cortisol, noradrenaline, and cholesterol—were less likely to become pregnant within a year. For example, the women with an [allostatic load](#) score of 5-6 would have a 59% reduction of fecundability compared with those with scores of 0.

"What we found provides a new idea for preconception counseling. But obviously, how to objectively assess the stress is a complex scientific question, and how to intervene and reduce the impact of [chronic stress](#) is a burning problem, which are all things we need to study further," said senior author Bei Wang, Ph.D., of Southeast University in Jiangsu, China.

More information: Xiang Hong et al, Female fecundability is associated with pre-pregnancy allostatic load: Analysis of a Chinese cohort, *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/aogs.14443](#)

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