

# Maternal depressive symptoms linked to slower fetal growth

December 4 2023, by Elana Gotkine

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Maternal depressive symptoms are associated with slower fetal growth rate in the critical rapid growth stage (CRGS) before delivery, according to a study published online Dec. 4 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Lu Zhang, M.P.H., from Sichuan University in Chengdu, China, and colleagues conducted a prospective multicenter birth cohort study to

examine the association between maternal depressive symptoms and fetal growth during the CRGS before delivery. A total of 2,676 mother-offspring dyads were included.

The researchers observed a significant correlation between a higher score of depressive symptoms in mothers and a slower rate of fetal growth across femur length, abdominal circumference, and estimated fetal weight ( $\beta = -0.40, -1.97, \text{ and } -50.11$ , respectively) after adjustment for confounders. In female fetuses or those with better family [socioeconomic conditions](#), these associations were found to be stronger.

"These findings underscore the importance of early detection and management of maternal depressive symptoms during pregnancy, particularly among [women](#) with higher socioeconomic status or female fetuses," the authors write.

**More information:** Lu Zhang et al, Maternal Prenatal Depressive Symptoms and Fetal Growth During the Critical Rapid Growth Stage, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.46018](#)

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