

# How does owning a mobile phone impact infant birth weight?

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Every year an estimated 20 million babies worldwide are born with low birth weight, according to the World Health Organization, leading to a wide range of significant short- and long-term consequences. Though

you may think the obvious answer is greater emphasis on food and nutrition for pregnant women, leading McGill University researchers are proposing an unexpected solution: the cellphone.

Their work is [published](#) in the journal *PLOS ONE*.

"Our evidence shows that when women in low income or under-developed regions have access to their own mobile phone, they have healthier pregnancies and healthier babies at birth," said Luca Maria Pesando, an adjunct professor in McGill's Department of Sociology and Associate Professor of Social Research and Public Policy at New York University (AD). "Phones open up a whole range of possibilities for knowledge that were not possible a decade ago."

Based on the findings—which also shed light on the importance of ensuring strong Internet and cellphone connectivity for those living in rural and remote communities in Canada, Pesando is now calling on governments, [policy makers](#) and phone companies to make cellphones and data plans more accessible, especially in regions where low birth weights are most prevalent.

**More information:** Luca Maria Pesando et al, Mobile phones and infant health at birth, *PLOS ONE* (2023). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0288089](#)

Provided by McGill University

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