

Women who experience major complications during pregnancy found to have increased risk of early death years later

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A team of medical researchers from the University of Texas Health Science Center, in the U.S., and Lund University, in Sweden, has found

via study of massive amounts of health data that women who experience serious complications during pregnancy have an increased risk of early death for many years after they give birth.

These findings are [published](#) in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

Prior research has shown that babies born to mothers who experience health complications, such as preeclampsia, have a higher risk of dying before, during and after birth. But little is known regarding the long-term prospects of the mothers.

In this new effort, the research team wondered if experiencing serious problems while carrying and/or delivering a baby might have an impact on [mortality rates](#) of mothers. To find out, they accessed the health records of 2.2 million women in Sweden who had given birth between the years 1973 and 2015. The database also contained the health information for those same women as they grew older.

The researchers compared the prospects of the women who had had serious health problems surrounding the birth of their child with women who had not given birth or who had given [birth](#) but experienced no serious problems. They found that women who had difficulties had a higher rate of mortality—for up to 40 years.

They found, for example, that women who had experienced [gestational diabetes](#) saw an increase in mortality rates of up to 53%, and those with a preterm delivery saw a 41% increase. They also found that those who delivered smaller-than-average [babies](#) had a 30% increase. Those with blood disorders not related to preeclampsia and those with preeclampsia had a 27% and 13% increase, respectively.

The researchers factored in other issues that could impact rates such as environment and genetics by including siblings in their study. They also

found that the increased mortality rates persisted into old age for some women.

The research team concludes that doctors need to take [pregnancy](#) complications into account when assessing the health of their patients. They also note that more research is required to determine why such women are at increased risk of dying.

More information: Casey Crump et al, Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes and Long-Term Mortality in Women, *JAMA Internal Medicine* (2024).
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