

Pregnant women and healthcare professionals perceive pregnancy associated risks differently

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Published in the open access journal *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* a new study suggests expectant mothers and healthcare professionals rate the risks that pregnancy and childbirth may pose to mother and child differently,

Researchers at City, University of London examined [risk perception](#) in relation to pregnancy and childbirth in pregnant women and maternity [healthcare professionals](#) in England, and what pregnant women and professionals believe about each other's risk perceptions.

Between June 2016 and April 2017, 53 doctors, 59 midwives and 68 pregnant women, were recruited from two NHS trusts in South East England and presented with 80 pregnancy or childbirth scenarios. They were asked to rate how high they believed the risk to be for mother and child. They were also asked to rate how strongly they believed their own and other groups would agree with their risk rating.

In 68 out of 80 scenarios, a [significant difference](#) between groups was recorded for perceived risk to mothers. Risks perceived to the baby were not significantly different. Pregnant women overall perceived risk the highest. When asked how they believed members of the other groups perceived pregnancy-related risks, pregnant women and midwives believed doctors' risk perception would be highest, however doctors consistently rated risks lower than other participants. When comparing their own rating to those of the others in the same group, participants incorrectly believed their peers rated risk similarly to themselves. However, the authors also observed differences in risk perception between members of the same group.

The findings suggest that individuals cannot assume others share their perception of risk or that they make correct assessments regarding others' risk perception. Healthcare professionals should be aware of these considerations when communicating with [pregnant women](#), and also with other professionals, according to the authors.

More information: Suzanne Lee et al. Pregnancy related risk perception in pregnant women, midwives & doctors: a cross-sectional survey, *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* (2019). [DOI: 10.1186/s12884-019-2467-4](#)

Provided by City University London

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