

Male partner's healthier lifestyle may help infertile obese female conceive

March 5 2015

Male partners of infertile obese females may increase the odds of conceiving a child by improving their own weight and dietary habits, preliminary results from a pilot study from Canada suggest. The results will be presented Thursday, March 5, at ENDO 2015, the annual meeting of the Endocrine Society in San Diego.

"We were thrilled to observe a significant relationship between some [dietary changes](#) and weight loss in [men](#) with the occurrence of a conception, when we compared the men in [couples](#) who conceived with those who did not," said lead author Matea Belan, MSc, graduate student in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec, Canada. "We were mostly surprised that the weight loss in men was independent of their spouse's weight loss, suggesting that the relationship between the conception and the weight loss in men was independent of the weight loss of their spouse."

Infertility, the inability to conceive after 12 months of regular unprotected sexual relations, affects roughly 12% to 16% of the population of Canada. Weight loss is known to improve reproductive health in obese women, but whether lifestyle modification in men can improve couples' fertility is still unknown.

In their pilot study, Belan and her colleagues followed couples who were referred to the fertility clinic of a Canadian academic center. Interested [male partners](#) were recruited and measured for weight, fat mass percentage and waist circumference and were evaluated for their

lifestyle habits at baseline and again either 12 months later or at the time of a pregnancy.

Roughly one-half of the women and their partners were randomized to the lifestyle intervention group and one half to the no-intervention control group.

The 65 participating male partners, who were on average 33 years of age, more often displayed worse lifestyle habits than the general Canadian male population aged 18 to 39 years. They were more likely to be obese themselves, were less active, and they less often ate breakfast or 5 or more daily fruits and vegetables.

Interventions involved sessions with a kinesiologist and a nutritionist, weekly group sessions with workshops on nutrition or psychology, and physical activity.

Men in couples who conceived were significantly more likely to lose more weight and eat more breakfasts or 5 or more daily fruits and vegetables than men in couples who did not conceive. Their weight loss was not related to the women's [weight loss](#).

"This pilot study is the first that suggests that lifestyle changes by men can improve the probability of the couple conceiving and that male partners should be included in lifestyle interventions aimed at improving the couple's fertility," Belan said.

The authors suggest that further research may lead to better and more cost-effective treatments to help obese couples conceive, and they plan to expand their [pilot study](#) in 2016 to fertility clinics throughout Canada.

Provided by The Endocrine Society

Citation: Male partner's healthier lifestyle may help infertile obese female conceive (2015, March 5) retrieved 14 July 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-03-male-partner-healthier-lifestyle-infertile.html>

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