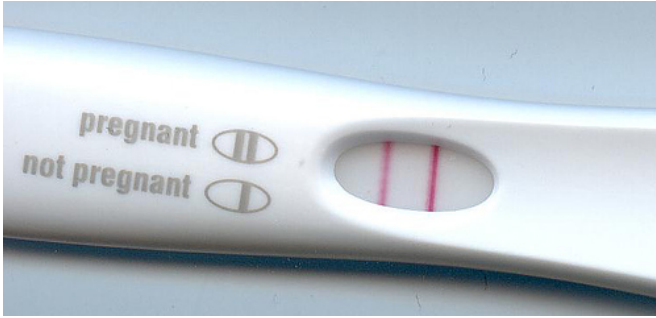


Mother's family history could pose risk for preterm birth

27 April 2017



Pregnancy test. Credit: public domain

If a pregnant mother has a family history of premature birth, she is at risk for a preterm birth of her baby, according to a new study by researchers from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) and Soroka University Medical Center.

Preterm birth occurs when a baby is born before 37 weeks of pregnancy and is the leading cause of infant hospitalization, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In 2015, [preterm birth](#) affected one of every 10 infants born in the United States.

The study, published in the *American Journal of Perinatology*, followed 2,300 [mothers](#) and daughters over 22 years (1991 to 2013), and found that the risk of [preterm delivery](#) was significantly higher among the 34 percent of women whose mothers had given birth early for any of her pregnancies. The risk remained significant even after adjusting for the race and age of the woman giving [birth](#).

Additionally, the researchers also found that even if a mother's aunt or sister had premature births, her risk of delivering prematurely was also 30 percent higher than normal.

"The results of the study show that the medical history of a pregnant woman's mother and aunts should also be taken into account when considering the risk of pregnancy complications such as [premature birth](#)," says Prof. Eyal Sheiner, M.D., Ph.D., vice dean of the BGU Faculty of Health Sciences (FOHS), member of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and a physician at Soroka. "Women who are at risk can benefit from close monitoring and early detection of genetic markers."

The research team also included Dr. Yoni Sherf of Soroka; FOHS Prof. Natalia Bilenko, Prof. Ilana Shoham-Vardi and Ruslan Sergienko of the BGU Department of Public Health; and Jaime Klein, a student in BGU's Medical School for International Health.

"Exposure to events, situations and/or substances in one generation can affect the growth and development of the next generation," the researchers note.

More information: Yehonatan Sherf et al, Recurrence of Preterm Delivery in Women with a Family History of Preterm Delivery, *American Journal of Perinatology* (2016). DOI: [10.1055/s-0036-1592131](https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0036-1592131)

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