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Pre-pregnancy obesity: Maternal, neonatal and childhood outcomes

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Introduction: Maternal pre or early pregnancy obesity carries significant implications for both mother and child. In both developed and developing countries the incidence of obesity continues to rise over the years.

Purpose: To investigate the association between pre or early pregnancy obesity and obstetrical, neonatal and childhood implications.

Materials & Methods: A literature review was conducted, included articles published in peer-reviewed journals between 2000 and 2011. Obesity was defined according to WHO (BMI ≥30). Studies with study sample patients with Diabetes mellitus were excluded.

Results: There were 95 studies that met the criteria and were included in the analysis. Maternal pre-pregnancy obesity is correlated to hypertensive disorders during pregnancy, higher rates of cesarean section and maternal mortality. Additionally patients with high BMI face in higher rates fertility problems. Regarding perinatal implications, maternal pre-pregnancy obesity is correlated to lower Apgar scores, higher rates of neonatal admission to NICU, higher mean birthweight, higher morbidity and mortality (fetal and perinatal period) and higher rates of congenital defects. The impact of maternal obesity on preterm delivery remains controversial. During childhood, offspring of obese mothers were more likely to have a higher BMI and also a tendency towards respiratory problems (wheezing, asthma).

Conclusions: Maternal pre-pregnancy obesity tends to have an important negative impact on obstetrical, neonatal and childhood outcomes. However, further research is needed in order to gain a clear image. There is a need for public health interventions in order to prevent pre-pregnancy obesity.

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