

Caffeine

W.Wen et al. *Epidemiology* (Jan 2001) Vol. 12 p 38.

A study of 650 women recruited before pregnancy. Diet was recorded before conception and up to live birth, or spontaneous abortion. Total caffeine was assessed on a monthly basis throughout.

Risk of spontaneous abortion was highest for women who reported not experiencing nausea at any time during pregnancy. Relative Risk approx. 4.

For those who consumed more than 300 mg caffeine per day on average, the risk of spontaneous abortion was found to be 2.5 (95% confidence interval 1.0 to 6.4). Increased risk only occurred after nausea was reported and only in the first trimester. A dose response relationship was demonstrated.

Caffeine intake before pregnancy did not affect outcome.

Caffeine intake for women who had no nausea showed a slightly protective effect.

Comment

Statistically this result is just significant. Coupled with a dose response relationship, it would seem this risk factor is worthy of further study.

Critics would suggest that daily records of caffeine intake would be more helpful, as the progression of pregnancy does not proceed in monthly steps. There are many periods in early pregnancy there is increased susceptibility to abortion. It is also possible that nausea may affect caffeine intake in an irregular manner.

