RISK FACTORS PREGNANCY LOSS INCREASES RISK OF MI

Women who have experienced recurrent miscarriage have a risk of myocardial infarction (MI) that is nine times higher than women who have not miscarried. This finding from the EPIC-Heidelberg study has been reported in *Heart*.

Earlier cross-sectional investigations into the possible link between pregnancy loss and risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) have yielded inconsistent results. Kharazmi and colleagues, therefore, designed the current analysis to assess this relationship prospectively. "Progesterone insufficiency, polycystic ovarian syndrome, some infections, inflammation, autoimmune factors, endothelial dysfunction, or high homocysteine level ... [are] underlying risk factors for spontaneous pregnancy loss which, at the same time, predispose to CVD," explains Dr Kharazmi.

Of the 13,612 women in the EPIC-Heidelberg cohort, those who had ever been pregnant and had no history of MI at baseline were included in the analysis. Each miscarriage conferred a 1.4-fold increase in the subsequent risk of MI. Among women who experienced at least three miscarriages, the risk of MI was 4.3 times higher than in those who had not miscarried; recurrent (more than three) miscarriage was associated with an almost ninefold increase in risk of MI. After considering traditional cardiovascular risk factors, the increase in risk was around fivefold for those who had experienced more than three miscarriages. Stillbirth was also associated with an increased risk of MI, albeit not as high as the risk for miscarriage. By contrast, no relationship was found between induced abortion and MI. Maternal risk of stroke was not associated with miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion.

"Repeated pregnancy loss could be considered as an early warning for CVD in women, with the possibility of early intervention," says Dr Kharazmi.

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