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Adolescent pregnancy: are there biological barriers for pregnancy outcomes?

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Abstract

The present prospective study comprised 111 adolescent (< 20 years) and 637 non-adolescent (20+ years) pregnant women, at the main maternity hospital and 79 primary health care centers in Taif area. Their demographic, behavioral, nutritional and socio economic data were analyzed with birth outcomes to compare the latter in the two study groups. The pregnancy outcomes considered were fetal growth retardation (small-for-date), low birth weight, and preterm delivery. Adolescent mothers were found to be more likely to deliver low birth weight infants even after controlling for major risk factors. The possibility of biological barriers to favorable outcome of pregnancy in adolescent mothers could not be overruled. However, more studies are needed to look at biological age rather than chronological age and to determine outcomes of pregnancy such as intra-uterine growth retardation and preterm delivery more accurately before drawing any conclusion