Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes Common in RA

BY AMY ROTHMAN SCHONFELD

Pregnant women with rheumatoid arthritis face an increased risk of adverse obstetric outcomes, and they deserve heightened prenatal attention, according to a recent report.

Specifically, mothers with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) were 1.47 times more likely than unaffected mothers to have a low-birth-weight baby and 1.20 times more likely to have a baby deemed small for gestational age. Women with RA also had a higher risk for developing preeclampsia (adjusted odds ratio 2.22) or having to undergo a cesarean section (adjusted OR 1.19), according to investigators (Ann. Rheum. Dis. 2010 Feb. [doi:10.1136/ard.2008.105262]).

"Our findings suggest a need for more intensive prenatal care among pregnant women with RA. In addition, early intervention should be considered to counter potential adverse obstetric outcomes for pregnant women with RA," said Herng Ching Lin, Ph.D., and associates at Taipei (Taiwan) Medical University.

Investigators used two data bases in their analysis: the Taiwan National Health Insurance Research Dataset (NHIRD), which included inpatient and ambulatory care claims for 1996-2003, and the second was the 2001-2003 National Birth Certificate Registry (NBCR), which is maintained by the government of Taiwan. From the almost 500,000 women who had live singleton births in Taiwan between 2001 and 2003, the investigators identified 1,912 mothers with RA (International Classification of Disease, Version 9-CM, code 714.0) and compared their pregnancy outcomes with those of 9,560 controls who were matched to the cases by age, parity, and year of delivery. ■