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Risk factors for spontaneous abortions

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Objective: To determine risk factors for spontaneous abortions.

Methodology: A hospital based case control study was carried out at the gynecological wards and antenatal clinics of the De Soysa Maternity Hospital during the period between August to December 2004. Cases were selected from mothers who had partial or full expulsion of foetus up to 28 weeks period of amenorrhoea (POA), which had been diagnosed by a Consultant Obstetrician. Controls were selected from the antenatal clinics who were having a viable foetus after completion of 28 weeks of POA. Two hundred and thirty eight cases and 496 controls were selected. A pre-tested interviewer administered questionnaire and modified life events inventory were administered to gather data. Univariate and multivariate logistic regression was applied and the results were expressed as odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals (95%CI).

Results: After controlling for confounding by multivariate logistic regression it was revealed that sleeping <8 hours/day (OR:3.9, 95%CI:2.7-5.7, p<0.001), walking >5 hours/day (OR:2.4, 95%CI:1.6-3.3, p<0.001), standing >4 hours/day (OR:2.3, 95%CI:1.6-3.3, p<0.001), exposure to kitchen smoke (OR:3.1, 95%CI:1.6-6.1, p<0.01), BMI of >26kg/m² (OR:2.1, 95%CI:1.3-3.6, p<0.01), drugs taken other than routine antenatal vitamins and supplements (OR:2.9, 95%CI:1.3-6.4, p<0.01) were risk factors and a maternal height <153 cm was a protective factor (OR:0.5, 95%CI:0.3-0.7, p<0.001) for spontaneous abortions.

Conclusions: Exposure to kitchen smoke, drugs taken other than routine ante natal supplements, sleeping <8 hours/day, standing >4 hours/day and walking >5 hours/day and maternal BMI of >26 kg/m² were risk factors for spontaneous abortions. Maternal height < 153cm was a protective factor for spontaneous abortions.