Body Mass Index and Delayed Conception: A European Multicenter Study on Infertility and Subfecundity

The inability to conceive after 12 months of unprotected intercourse was estimated to range from 5% to 28% in developed countries. In the past years, research has focused on specific lifestyle factors that may be related to infertility including use of tobacco, alcohol consumption, caffeine intake and occupational exposure. However, despite the increasing knowledge of obesity as a public health challenge, little research has been done to investigate the link between obesity and infertility. This study was therefore conducted as part of a wider European study on infertility and subfecundity to look at “the potential effect of body mass index (BMI) on time to pregnancy in a population-based sample of pregnant women from five European countries.”

4,035 women were recruited for the study, of which about 12% were overweight and over 3% were obese. Overall, the study found that there was a strong association for women who smoked between obesity and delayed conception. Overall, the study concluded that smoker women with obesity required a longer time to conceive than underweight smoker women.