



Obesity in pregnancy: a retrospective prevalence-based study on health service utilisation and costs on the NHS

Maternal obesity is increasingly becoming a concern across the UK. While the health impacts of overweight and obesity during pregnancy have been well-documented, associated costs are often overlooked. Yet, overweight and obesity during pregnancy has been identified as one of the biggest challenges for maternity services across the UK. The aim of this paper was to investigate the utilisation of health services and associated costs among normal weight and overweight/obese pregnant women.

Overall, a strong association was found between mean total cost and BMI with the overweight group being on average 22% higher for total costs. Furthermore, obesity in pregnancy increases mean total costs by £1172 compared to the normal weight group. In addition to increased direct costs, obesity in pregnancy has also been shown to have negative repercussions on the offspring's health, with increased risk of adverse perinatal outcomes, delayed mental development and higher risks of developing obesity. The findings from this study therefore provide strong evidence for increased utilisation of health services and direct healthcare expenditure in women with a BMI higher than normal during pregnancy.

Reference: Morgan KL, Rahman MA, Macey S, et al. Obesity in pregnancy: a retrospective prevalence-based study on health service utilisation and costs on the NHS. *BMJ Open*. 2014;4(2):e003983. [doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2013-003983](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2013-003983)