The impact of body mass index on maternal and neonatal outcomes: a retrospective study in a UK obstetric population, 2004-2011

Maternal obesity has significant health implications, both for the mother herself as well as for the baby. Not only are mortality risks increased antenatally, labour outcomes are also poorer for women with overweight or obesity. The objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of overweight and obesity, and the impact of body mass index on maternal and neonatal outcomes in a UK obstetric population.

Conducted as a retrospective study, early pregnancy BMI was available for 93.3% of the women who met the inclusion criteria and 44.6% of the included women were categorised as overweight or obese. Overall, the cohort highlighted that a high body mass index increases the likelihood of negative pregnancy outcomes, both for the mother and the neonate. This knowledge is very valuable, as it highlights the implications for the management of overweight and obese women during their pregnancy, labour as well as postnatally.