

Health

A life-saving procedure

C-section 'complication' risk ups with mom's age

NEW YORK, April 15, (RTS): Pregnant women are more likely to have complications during labor and cesarean deliveries than during vaginal births, and a new study offers fresh evidence that older mothers are most at risk.

Rates of cesarean deliveries, or C-sections, have risen in the developed world to more than 20 percent of births, even though the World Health Organization recommends this surgery only for the roughly 10 to 15 percent of cases when the health of the mother or baby is in danger. While C-sections can be life-saving, the procedures carry risks like infection, excessive bleeding, damage to reproductive organs and blood clots.

Caused

For the current study, researchers wanted to get a clearer picture of how often complications might result from the surgery versus from underlying medical problems that might have caused mothers to get these operations. To do this, they examined data on 1,444 women who experienced severe complications after delivery that were unrelated to pre-existing health problems. They also looked at a comparison group of 3,464 women who didn't have complications.

Women who had C-sections were 80 percent more likely to have complications than those who delivered vaginally, researchers report in the journal CMAJ. And women over age 35 who had C-sections were almost three times more likely to have severe complications.

"Overall, delivery is safe," senior study author Dr Catherine Deneux-Tharaux of INSERM in Paris said by email. "However, in a minority of cases, severe complications can occur in the mother during or soon after the delivery. This happens in about 1.5 percent of deliveries and the main cause is major hemorrhage."

As women age, the uterine muscle loses its ability to contract efficiently, and this can contribute to heavy bleeding after C-sections

among older women, Deneux-Tharaux said.

"The physiological stop in bleeding after birth involves a contraction of the uterus; that might be reduced in older women," Deneux-Tharaux said.

About 85 percent of the complications involved bleeding after delivery.

Roughly 36 percent of the women who had severe complications delivered by C-section, compared with 18 percent of the mothers who didn't have complications.

Women of all ages had an increased risk of complications with C-sections that were performed after mothers went into labor, a decision that is often made because of medical issues that arise for women or for their babies.

Mothers under 25 years old who had C-sections done after they started labor were 60 percent more likely to have complications than their counterparts who had a vaginal delivery.

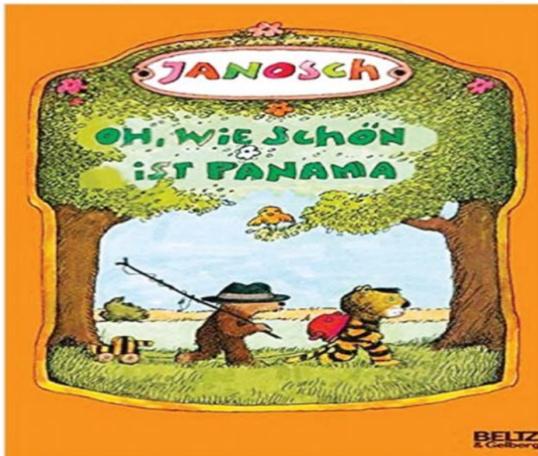
Pregnant women 35 or older who had C-sections after they went into labor were four times more likely to have complications than mothers over 35 who had vaginal births.

Complications

For C-sections scheduled before women went into labor, however, only the oldest women in the study had an increased risk of complications. Mothers 35 and older who had C-sections without first going into labor were five times more likely to have severe complications than mothers who had vaginal births.

The study wasn't a controlled experiment designed to prove whether or how C-sections might cause complications or to determine how the timing of these surgeries relative to the start of labor might impact the risk. The researchers also acknowledge that they could not account for every circumstance when a pre-existing problem or complication might have been the reason a C-section was performed.

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A flyer of the event

Herbal supplement kratom is tied to more US deaths

Caffeine could boost exercise performance

NEW YORK, April 15, (Agencies): Taking caffeine before exercise could improve performance during a broad range of exercise tasks, according to a new review of past research.

In particular, caffeine could help speed, power, strength and endurance, researchers wrote in the British Journal of Sports Medicine.

"Supplementation with caffeine is highly prevalent among athletes, with one study from 2011 indicating that around 75 percent of urine samples from athletes competing in the Olympic Games contain measurable levels of caffeine," said lead author Jozo Grgic of Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia.

In 2004, caffeine was removed from the World Anti-Doping Agency list of substances banned during competitions. "Since then, the intake of caffeine among athletes has only increased with no signs of slowing down," Grgic told

Reuters Health by email.

Grgic and colleagues conducted an "umbrella review" - meaning they looked at results of earlier reviews that analyzed multiple studies of caffeine and exercise performance.

The 21 earlier reviews, done between 2004 and 2018, analyzed an average of 19 studies each.

Grgic's team found that caffeine helped muscle endurance, muscle strength, jumping performance, exercise speed, anaerobic power and aerobic endurance.

Endurance

Three reviews, involving an average of 13 studies each, supported the ergogenic, or enhancing, effect of caffeine on strength. Two reviews, which looked at a total of 39 studies, supported an effect on endurance.

One review supported an effect of caffeine on vertical jump height, and one supported speed during running,

cycling and rowing.

In general, the effect of caffeine was greater for aerobic exercise than for anaerobic exercise.

The "optimal" dose remains elusive, Grgic said. Although coffee is the most widely-used form of caffeine globally, it's not commonly studied as a pre-exercise performance enhancer. The caffeine dose depends on coffee bean type, preparation method, cup size, brand and additive flavors.

"As a broad rule of thumb, two cups of coffee, consumed around 60 minutes before exercise, should exert an ergogenic effect in most individuals," Grgic said.

But "the response to caffeine ingestion varies from person to person," Grgic cautioned. "Individuals interested in supplementing with caffeine should be careful with the dose of caffeine, as high doses may result in strong side-

effects such as a headache, nausea, insomnia, and others."

Also:

NEW YORK: US health officials say overdose deaths involving the herbal supplement kratom are more common than previously reported.

A government report released Thursday said kratom was a cause in 91 overdose deaths in 27 states. Officials previously said they knew of 44 nationally. Most who died had also taken heroin, fentanyl or other drugs. But kratom was the only substance detected in seven of the deaths.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported the numbers after combing through death certificates and toxicology reports from an 18-month period. Kratom comes from a plant native to Southeast Asia. It is sold in capsules and powders with claims that it helps ease pain, anxiety and drug dependence.

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