

Bell's palsy in pregnancy and puerperium - neonatal outcomes

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Background

Bell's palsy is more common among pregnant and puerperal (6 first weeks postpartum) women, but the reason remains unclear. We aimed to assess the association between neonatal outcomes and Bell's palsy in pregnancy and/or puerperium.

Material and methods

This is a retrospective cohort study using data from the Swedish Medical Birth Register and National Patient Register. Background information and neonatal outcomes were retrieved from all women who were diagnosed with Bell's palsy in pregnancy or puerperium 2005-2015. All women who gave birth during the same time period, without history of Bell's palsy, served as comparison group.

Results

Preterm delivery, birthweight <3000 g and >4000 g, Apgar <4 and <7 at 5 minutes after birth, and malformations were more common among puerperal women with Bell's palsy compared with controls, while pregnant women with Bell's palsy and controls had similar outcomes. There were no significant differences between groups regarding neonatal morbidity and stillbirth.

Conclusion

Bell's palsy in puerperium was associated with neonatal adverse outcomes, while Bell's palsy in pregnancy was not. This suggests that puerperal Bell's palsy could be a result of adverse experiences, but this warrants further investigation