

**Pregnancy Complications in Pandemics: Is Pregnancy- Related Anxiety a Possible**

**Physiological Risk Factor?**

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**Background:** Birth and pregnancy complications increased by 10.2% during the 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Pregnant women are at high risk for anxiety, which might trigger physio-logical stress, leading to pregnancy complications.

**Aim:** This study aimed to investigate factors leading to antenatal anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also aimed to discuss our find-ings with regard to the current literature about pregnancy complications.

**Methods:** This cross-sectional study interviewed 377 pregnant women and assessed anxiety using a validated 7-item general anxiety disorder (GAD-7) scale. Anxiety was related to physiological and demo-graphic parameters. Anxiety was subdivided into pandemic- and pregnancy-related anxiety to minimize results bias.

**Results:** Our results showed that 75.3% of pregnant women were anxious. The mean GAD-7 score was  $8.28 \pm 5$ . Linear regression analysis showed that for every increase in the number of previous pregnancies, there was a 1.3 increase in anxiety level ( $p < 0.001$ ). Women with no previous miscarriages were more anxious ( $p < 0.001$ ). Surprisingly, pregnant women who were previously infected with COVID-19 were 6% less stressed. Pregnant women with comorbid-ities were more stressed ( $p < 0.001$ ). Low income ( $p < 0.001$ ) and age ( $p < 0.05$ ) were the demo-graphic factors most significantly related to increased anxiety.

**Conclusions:** The prevalence of pregnancy-related anxiety increased threefold in Saudi Arabia due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthcare support should be available remotely during pandemics; pregnant women (especially those with comorbidities) should be educated about the risks of infection and complications to prevent anxiety-related complications during pregnancy.