

## Mode of delivery and subsequent fertility

E.C. Evers<sup>1,\*</sup>, K.C. McDermott<sup>2</sup>, J.L. Blomquist<sup>3</sup>, and V.L. Handa<sup>1</sup>

**SUMMARY:** Past research indicates that cesarean delivery is associated with smaller family size compare to vaginal birth. In other words, women who have a cesarean birth go on to have fewer subsequent children compared to women who deliver vaginally.

Some researchers speculate that cesarean delivery might reduce fertility. However, this claim is controversial. Given that previous studies have reached different conclusions, we sought to investigate whether fertility is affected by delivery type.

We compared subsequent self-reported fertility problems between 534 women who delivered their first baby by cesarean and 422 who delivered vaginally. The most important finding from this research is that infertility problems were *equally common* in the vaginal and cesarean birth groups (7% versus 6%,  $P = 0.597$ ). In addition, the number of women who *never* had another delivery after their first was also similar between these two groups (25% versus 24%,  $P = 0.650$ ). Finally, the interval between first and second birth was similar after cesarean versus vaginal birth (30.8 months versus 30.6 months,  $P = 0.872$ ).

As would be expected, women who reported infertility problems before their first birth were much more likely to have infertility problems after their first birth. Specifically, the odds of later fertility problems were 5 times higher (odds ratio 5.16, 95% confidence interval 3.60, 7.39) for women who reported a fertility problem before the first birth compared to those who hadn't had difficulty getting pregnant the first time. This association between prior infertility and subsequent fertility was independent of whether the woman delivered by cesarean or vaginal birth.

In summary, our findings suggest no association between delivery type and subsequent fertility. Women whose first delivery was by cesarean were no more likely than those who delivered vaginally to experience (1) fewer subsequent deliveries, (2) prolonged interval between births, or (3) infertility after delivery. These findings should be reassuring to women who deliver by cesarean.

The full text of this research can be read below:

[http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/johns\\_hopkins\\_bayview/\\_docs/medical\\_services/gynecology\\_obstetrics/research/MOAD/ModeOfDeliverySubsequentFertility\\_FullText.pdf](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/johns_hopkins_bayview/_docs/medical_services/gynecology_obstetrics/research/MOAD/ModeOfDeliverySubsequentFertility_FullText.pdf)