



The Effect of Maternal Age and Parity on Birth Weight Among Bengalees of Kolkata, India

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ABSTRACT A cross-sectional retrospective study was conducted from April 26, 2002 to August 14, 2002. A total of 331 Bengalee mother-baby pairs were examined in the obstetric ward of M.R. Bangur Hospital. This is a hospital located in South Kolkata that serves the needs of individuals belonging to the lower socio-economic group. The overall mean (SD) birth weight (BW) was 2592 gm (371 gm). Among boys, mean BW was 2658 gm (362 gm) while among girls it was 2515 gm (367 gm). The present study found that the overall incidence of low birth weight (LBW) was 36.6% among Bengalee population. The highest incidence of LBW was found in young (< 19 years of age) mothers. Mother's age increased significantly ($p < 0.005$) with the decrease in LBW. Adolescent mothers (< 20 years of age) had 1.5 times more risk of delivering LBW baby. The highest occurrence of LBW was found in mothers with first parity. The rate of LBW weight decreased significantly ($p < 0.001$) with increasing parity. Mean age ($p < 0.05$) and parity ($p < 0.0001$) were also significantly different between mothers who delivered LBW and normal birth weight (NBW) infants. Furthermore, the difference in mean birth weight was statistically significant in case of maternal age group ($p < 0.005$) and parity ($p < 0.001$).

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