

Babies of older fathers may be less healthy

3rd November, 2018



A study from Stanford University in the USA reports that babies of older fathers may be more likely to have health problems. Scientists studied data on 40,529,905 births in the USA between 2007 and 2016 to ascertain whether a father's age adversely affects his child's

health. Researchers discovered that compared to babies born to fathers in the 25-to-34 age bracket, babies born to fathers over the age of 45 were at greater risk of being born with health problems. These included being born prematurely, having a low birth weight or being admitted to a neonatal intensive care unit. The researchers added that babies born to older fathers were generally not as healthy as those conceived by younger fathers.

One scientist said a lot more detailed research was needed to prove that older fathers conceive less-healthy babies. Dr Michael Eisenberg from the Stanford University School of Medicine said: "I think it's important to understand that the risks we are seeing are modest. So for an individual, the risk may not change much." He added that his team's data could show a trend that health departments in governments might want to be aware of. He said: "At a population level, there may be public health implications of men...waiting longer to conceive." Dr Eisenberg concluded that: "While the oldest father ever is 96, this research suggests that the risk to child and mother may increase if fathers conceive later."

Sources: newsweek.com / stanford.edu / theguardian.com

Writing

There should be an age limit on when men can have children. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

study / university / babies / fathers / health problems / age / risk / weight / born / scientist / important / modest / individual / aware / conceive / change / government

True / False

- a) A report on the health of babies was made by Yale University. T / F
- b) Scientists studied data on over 40 million births. T / F
- c) The article says babies born to fathers aged over 55 were unhealthy. T / F
- d) Babies born to older fathers are generally heavier at birth. T / F
- e) A scientist said there was a lot of research to prove the research. T / F
- f) A doctor said the risks are not so big. T / F
- g) The doctor said governments needed to know about the research. T / F
- h) The oldest ever father to have conceived a child is 96. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. study | a. small |
| 2. likely | b. group |
| 3. ascertain | c. as a rule |
| 4. bracket | d. consequences |
| 5. generally | e. probable |
| 6. prove | f. chance |
| 7. modest | g. paper |
| 8. data | h. show beyond doubt |
| 9. implications | i. facts and figures |
| 10. risk | j. find out |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of older fathers?
- b) Would you be an older parent?
- c) What are the advantages of having an older father?
- d) What are the advantages of being an older father?
- e) Should there be an age limit on men and women becoming parents?
- f) What kind of parent would you be?
- g) Should governments educate people about this research?
- h) Do people need to think more carefully about having children?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. older fathers may be more likely to | a. implications |
| 2. a father's age adversely | b. intensive care |
| 3. fathers in the 25-to-34 | c. was needed |
| 4. being admitted to a neonatal | d. aware of |
| 5. babies born to older fathers were | e. have health problems |
| 6. a lot more detailed research | f. may increase |
| 7. his team's data could show a | g. age bracket |
| 8. governments might want to be | h. generally not as healthy |
| 9. public health | i. trend |
| 10. the risk to child and mother | j. affects his child's health |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of when you hear the word 'babies'?
- What do you think about what you read?
- What are the risks of parenthood?
- What are the disadvantages of having an older father?
- What are the disadvantages of being an older father?
- What are the joys of parenthood?
- What three adjectives best describe this story?
- What do you think of a 96-year-old becoming a father?

Spelling

- to taesarzni whether a father's age...
- vearsdly affects his child's health
- the 25-to-34 age ertabck
- being born yelarumptre
- admitted to a neonatal sieentvni care unit
- those cneeoivcd by younger fathers
- a lot more dteildae research
- the risks we are seeing are mteosd
- for an aliidduvni
- health rnteatsdepn in governments
- health tiimcpaniols
- Dr Eisenberg ncdlduoed that

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. j	4. b	5. c
6. h	7. a	8. i	9.	10.

Role Play

Role A – Smiles

You think smiles are the best things about babies. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least cute of these (and why): bath time, toys or first words.

Role B – Bath Time

You think bath time is the best thing about babies. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least cute of these (and why): smiles, toys or first words.

Role C – Toys

You think toys are the best things about babies. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least cute of these (and why): bath time, smiles or first words.

Role D – First Words

You think first words are the best things about babies. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least cute of these (and why): bath time, toys or smiles.

Speaking – Babies

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things about babies at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| • first words | • smile |
| • dinner time | • bath time |
| • first steps | • clothes |
| • toys | • hands |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.