Common Bacterial Infection May be a Cause of Pre-Eclampsia

By Greg Arnold, DC, CSCS, November 8, 2006, abstracted from Pre-eclampsia is associated with Helicobacter pylori seropositivity in Italy” in the December 2006 issue in the Journal of Hypertension

Link – http://www.nowfoods.com/HealthLibrary/HealthArticles/WeeklyNewsletter/M089738.htm

Pre-eclampsia is characterized by headache, visual disturbances, confusion, abdominal pain, and decreased liver and kidney function. It typically develops after the 20th week of pregnancy, affects 5 to 8% of all pregnancies, causes 50-70% of all cases of high blood pressure during pregnancy, and causes more than 76,000 deaths each year.

Fortunately, research has shown the importance of controlling blood pressure during pregnancy and nutritional supplementation, from 70 micrograms of selenium per day to 1,000 mg of calcium per day, to help keep blood pressure in normal range. Now a new study has found that new treatments for pre-eclampsia may be available because a new possible cause of pre-eclampsia has been found in the form of the bacterium H. Pylori.

In the study, 47 women diagnosed with pre-eclampsia and 47 women without pre-eclampsia gave blood samples that were then tested for H. Pylori. What they found was that H. Pylori infection was “significantly higher” in mothers with pre-eclampsia (51.1%) compared to women with uneventful pregnancy (31.9%). What they also found was that the H. Pylori infection also caused expression of a gene called cytotoxin-associated antigen A (CagA) that is “among the most virulent [genes] associated with increased inflammation”.

For the researchers, “Our study presents direct evidence of an association between H. pylori infection and [pre-eclampsia] in Italian women.” What this now means is that treatments shown to help control H. Pylori levels in the body, from cranberry juice to green tea to probiotics, may also be effective in helping control pre-eclampsia.

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Reference

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