

Restless legs syndrome during pregnancy in Czech women

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Objectives: The objectives of this study was to identify the prevalence of restless legs syndrome (RLS) among pregnant Czech women, using a questionnaire- based survey during the third trimester of pregnancy, and to determine risk factors.

Methods: In this cross-sectional study we surveyed 776 pregnant women (18-49 years old) who came to the prenatal outpatient clinic to consult an obstetrician during the third trimester (36th-38th weeks of pregnancy). We used the 3 minimal epidemiological questions to assign RLS status, disease course and frequency of symptoms. Furthermore, we asked about previous pregnancies and comorbidities.

Results: The prevalence of RLS during pregnancy was 28.0% (95% confidence interval from 24.9% to 31.2%) in our sample. Of these 63% of the cases had symptoms for the first time the current pregnancy. On the other hand 16.6% reported positive family history of RLS. More than two-thirds of the subjects (71.0%) presented symptoms more than once per week and the largest proportion of them (49.3%) reported onset or major worsening of previous symptoms in the third trimester. There were no demographic differences between these groups. We did not observe any differences in prevalence of screened comorbidities between RLS positive and RLS negative pregnant women, only leg cramps were marginally more frequent in the RLS group (23% vs. 16%, $p=0,022$) as was hypothyreosis (13% vs. 8%, $p=0,033$). We could not confirm higher prevalence of RLS among multiparous women.

Conclusion: RLS during pregnancy is more frequent than in the general population. Moreover, about two-thirds of the pregnant women with RLS in our study suffer from frequent symptoms. RLS presents especially in the third trimester. Despite relatively young age of the patients, family history is positive relatively rarely.

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