

THYROID AUTOIMMUNITY IS ASSOCIATED WITH AN INCREASED RISK OF SPONTANEOUS MISCARRIAGE IN EUTHYROID WOMEN

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recommended that medical practitioners follow the recommendations suggested by the Endocrine Society Guidelines in Thyroid Disorders in Pregnancy (2); a serum TSH over 2.5 mIU/L in the first trimester of gestation is considered diagnostic of hypothyroidism and is known to potentially affect the outcome of pregnancies, including miscarriages. In the present meta-analysis, serum TSH in the selected articles ranged from 0.3 to 5.0 mIU/L, therefore many of the miscarriages occurred in women suffering from mild hypothyroidism. It has to be kept in mind that many of the studies were published before 2007, when the recommendation for a serum TSH range was given. Serum TSH levels in the antithyroid-antibody-positive women were 0.61 mIU/L higher than in the antithyroid-antibody-negative women (95% CI, 0.51-0.71; $P < 0.00001$).

The other issue discussed by the authors is patient age; women with positive thyroid antibodies in the 9 studies considered were, on average, 1.29 years older than those with negative antibodies; it is known that there is an increase in the incidence of spontaneous miscarriage with age.

In summary, the meta-analysis done by Chen and Hu supports the general medical concept of an increased rate of spontaneous miscarriages in women harboring positive thyroid antibodies, although other factors, such as age, mild thyroid dysfunction, and higher serum TSH values, albeit within normal limits, could contribute to it.

The dilemma for the practitioner in the presence of a euthyroid, antithyroid-antibody-positive woman who wishes to become pregnant or who is in her first trimester is to treat or not to treat with levothyroxine. This is a controversial issue among endocrinologists and obstetricians, with some benefit of treatment reported in the literature (3-5). Considering the higher risk for miscarriages in euthyroid women with thyroid autoimmunity and the potential benefits of levothyroxine therapy, could 50 or 75 μg daily of levothyroxine be harmful to a healthy young woman?

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References

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