

## **Maternal Aging and Obstetric Outcome**

It has been well documented that older mothers has a higher risk of having adverse reproductive outcome. Traditionally, a cutoff at age 35 years is used to define the mothers of advanced age, but some studies have used the age of 40 years. These cutoff values are nevertheless arbitrary. The Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine, HKU has reviewed the obstetric outcome of women with singleton pregnancies managed in Tsan Yuk and Queen Mary Hospitals between 1998 and 2001, with the data extracted from the SCIS system of the Hospital Authority, to correlate obstetric outcome with maternal age.

It can be seen that with advancing maternal age, there was significant differences in the maternal characteristics. There was a positive correlation in the prevalence of antepartum haemorrhage, pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes mellitus, preterm birth at <37 weeks as well as <32 weeks gestation, caesarean delivery, macrosomic ( $\geq 4000\text{g}$ ) and low birthweight ( $< 2500\text{g}$ ) babies. The results demonstrated for the first time an almost linear relationship between most of the parameters used to determine obstetric outcome and increasing maternal age, which made more physiological sense. The findings suggest that there is no threshold value on maternal age for most of the adverse obstetric outcomes.