

# Hyperemesis gravidarum is associated with oxidative stress

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## Abstract

Hyperemesis gravidarum (HEG), associated with pregnancy, is a severe form of nausea and vomiting causing decrease in nutrient antioxidants. Hence, we hypothesize that oxidation injury may be involved in the pathogenesis of HEG. Plasma levels of the ubiquitous antioxidant, reduced glutathione (GSH) may serve as a sensitive measure for systemic oxidative stress. Women with pregnancies complicated by HEG (study group) were compared with pregnant women without HEG (pregnant control group) and with healthy nonpregnant women (nonpregnant control group). Plasma GSH levels were determined in the study group at the time of admission to hospital, and when the vomiting had ceased, it was compared with those of the two control groups. Plasma GSH levels were significantly higher in the pregnant control group than in nonpregnant controls ( $6.13 \pm 2.9$  microM vs.  $1.01 \pm 0.3$  microM  $p < 0.01$ ). In contrast, values in the HEG women at the time of admission were significantly lower than the pregnant controls ( $3.12 \pm 1.6$  microM,  $p < 0.01$ ). At the second sampling, when the women had ceased vomiting, plasma GSH values were higher than at the acute stage of the illness and were no longer significantly different from the pregnant control group ( $4.43 \pm 1.6$  microM). Low values of plasma GSH in HEG patients suggest that oxidative stress is associated with this condition.

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