



Risk Assessment – RMU-RA-002 – New and Expectant Mothers

Carried out by: Samantha Thulborn	Date carried out: April 2014	Review Date: April 2015 Reviewed no changes made
		Review Date: April 2016

A "expectant or new mother" is an employee; who is pregnant, who has given birth within the previous six months, or who is breast-feeding.

In order that her own health and safety and that of her child may be protected, an employee is expected to notify her employer (via an appropriate manager) that she falls into the definition. Once notified, the assessment, located at the end of this risk assessment and in the R drive 'Respiratory Medicine' folder, should be completed by the supervisor (or an appropriate manager), together with the mother to identify any significant risks and any findings acted upon.

The University do not equate pregnancy with ill health. The intention of this procedure is simply to prevent risks to the expectant or new mother and to the child from work which would not usually produce such risk.

Some hazards in the workplace may affect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers and of their children. Exposures can lead to complications, possibly resulting, for example, in miscarriage. Conditions which may be considered acceptable in normal situations may no longer be so during pregnancy.

Hazard - Mental and physical fatigue and working hours	Risk – Low
Existing Controls – It may be necessary to adjust working hours temporarily, as well as other working conditions, including the timing and frequency of rest breaks.	
Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.	

Hazard - Postural problems connected with the activity of new or expectant mothers. Fatigue from standing and other physical work has long been associated with miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight.	Risk – Medium
Existing Controls – Ensure that the hours, volume and pacing of work are not excessive and that, where possible, the employees themselves have some control over how work is organised. Ensure that seating is available where appropriate. Fatigue can be avoided or reduced by taking longer and more frequent breaks during the work session. Adjusting workstations or work procedures may help remove postural problems and the risk of accidents.	
Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.	

Hazard - Work at heights	Risk – Medium
Existing Controls – It is hazardous for pregnant workers working at heights, for example ladders, platforms. Pregnant workers must not be exposed to work at heights.	
Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.	

Hazard - Working alone - Pregnant women are more exposed to risk than others when working alone, particularly if they fall or if urgent medical attention is required.	Risk – Medium
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Existing Controls - Depending on their medical condition, access to communications with others and levels of (remote) supervision involved, may need to be reviewed and revised to ensure that help and support is available when required, and that emergency procedures (if needed) take into account the needs of new and expectant mothers.

Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.

Hazard - Occupational stress - hormonal, physiological and psychological changes during pregnancy after shortly after make mothers more susceptible to stress. Stress is associated in some studies with increased incidence of miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and also with impaired ability to breastfeed.

**Risk –
Medium**

Existing Controls – Identify known stress factors (such as job insecurity, workloads, etc.) and the particular medical and psychosocial factors affecting the individual woman. Where appropriate employ adjustments to working conditions or working hours, and ensuring that the necessary understanding, support and recognition is there when the woman returns to work, whilst her privacy is also respected.

Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.

Hazard - Standing activities - Physiological changes during pregnancy (increased blood and systolic volume, general dilatation of blood vessels and possible compression of abdominal or pelvic veins) promote peripheral congestion while standing.

**Risk –
Medium**

Existing Controls – Ensure that seating is available where appropriate. Constant sitting or constant standing are both inadvisable. It is better to alternate between the two. If this is not possible, provision should be made for breaks.

Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.

Hazard - Sitting activities - Pregnancy-specific changes in the coagulation factors and mechanical compression of the pelvic veins by the uterus pose a relatively high risk of thrombosis or embolism for pregnant women.

**Risk –
Medium**

Existing Controls – Conduct relevant DSE assessments and ensure that the employee does not sit for long periods of time. Regular breaks from sitting should be taken.

Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.

Hazard - Risk of infection or kidney disease as a result of inadequate hygiene facilities - Without easy access to toilets there may be increased risks to health and safety.

**Risk –
Medium**

Existing Controls – Assess individuals access to facilities within the work place.

Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.

Hazard - Hazards as a result of inappropriate Nutrition - Adequate and appropriate nutrition and liquid refreshment (especially clean drinking water) at regular intervals is essential to the health of the new or expectant mother and her child(ren).

**Risk –
Low**

Existing Controls – Easy access to refreshments and storage facilities. New and expectant mothers' particular needs concerning rest, meal and refreshment breaks may be established in consultation with the individuals concerned.

Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.



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Hazard – Biological reagents	Risk – Medium
Existing Controls – Avoid work with biological reagents if possible. No work with biological reagents in group 3 & 4 should be undertaken. Ensure all work is carried out to protocol to avoid contact. Discuss with Laboratory Manager.	
Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.	

Hazard – Manual Handling of loads	Risk – Medium
Existing Controls – Discuss with Laboratory Manager. Avoid any heavy lifting where possible.	
Further Action required – Assess the individual's needs and requirements. Review throughout the pregnancy.	

Assessment:

DEPARTMENT:		
RESEARCH GROUP:		
NAME OF MOTHER/EXPECTANT MOTHER:		
Duration of pregnancy at time of risk assessment:		
Due date:		
Mother/expectant mother's signature:		Date:
Supervisor or assessor's signature:		Date:
BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS - Is expectant/new mother routinely exposed to biological agents (viruses, bacteria, animals etc.) ?	YES / NO	
Is expectant mother exposed to Biological agents known to cause abortion of the unborn child, or physical and neurological damage, such as Rubella, toxoplasma and cytomegalovirus.	YES / NO (If 'YES' please give details)	
Are normal controls sufficient to protect mother or unborn/newborn child from any increased risk?	YES / NO (If 'YES' please give details)	



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<p>If "no" give details of action to be taken to reduce or remove risk:</p>	
<p>CHEMICAL HAZARDS - Is expectant/new mother routinely exposed to hazardous chemical agents (toxins, mutagens, teratogens etc)?</p>	<p>YES / NO</p>
<p>If "yes" list any chemicals used that have the following associated risk phrases:</p> <p><i>R40 Limited evidence of carcinogenic effect</i></p> <p><i>R45 May cause cancer</i></p> <p><i>R46 May cause heritable genetic damage</i></p> <p><i>R49 May cause cancer by inhalation</i></p> <p><i>R61 May cause harm to the unborn child.</i></p> <p><i>R63 Possible risk of harm to the unborn child.</i></p> <p><i>R64 May cause harm to breastfed babies.</i></p>	
<p>Are normal controls sufficient to protect mother or unborn/newborn child from any increased risk?</p>	<p>YES / NO (If 'YES' please give details)</p>
<p>If "no" give details of action to be taken to reduce or remove risk:</p>	



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RADIOLOGICAL HAZARDS - Is expectant/new mother routinely exposed to radiological agents? <i>If yes the Senior Radiation Protection Supervisor must be informed and advice sought regarding work</i>	YES / NO
If yes give details and action to be taken to reduce risk:	
MANUAL HANDLING – Is the expectant mother involved in manual handling tasks? E.g. moving heavy/awkward loads	YES / NO
If yes give details and action to be taken to reduce risk:	
ERGONOMICS - Are there any ergonomic issues that might cause increased risk to mother or unborn child? E.g. Repetitive movements, bending or awkward postures. Does their work involve prolonged periods of sitting or standing?	YES / NO
If yes give details and action to be taken to reduce risk:	
LONE/OUT OF HOURS WORKING – Does the expectant mother work outside of normal hours? In the later stages of pregnancy women are more likely to need urgent medical attention.	YES / NO



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If yes give details and action to be taken to reduce risk:

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) – Is the expectant mother classified as a user?

YES / NO

If 'YES' a DSE assessment should be conducted and reviewed regularly.

ADDITIONAL HAZARDS - Travelling in the course of work, working at height, working in extremes of temperature, stress/fatigue and emergency procedures- e.g. do they need assistance exiting the building?

Please give details and actions to be taken to reduce risk: