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# Test in early pregnancy reveals the probability of a miscarriage

By Laura Donnelly

A SIMPLE test could inform women of their chance of miscarriage just days after they conceive, a study suggests.

One in four pregnancies fails, with rates of miscarriages rising substantially among older women. But research has found that measuring hormone levels soon after conception can provide information about how viable the pregnancy is.

Glasgow scientists examined the levels of beta-human chorionic gonadotropin in more than 2,000 women who had just had a positive pregnancy test.

The hormone is produced by the placenta from the very early stages of pregnancy and can be detected through a blood or urine test. It is made by cells formed in the placenta, which nourishes the egg after it has been fertilised and becomes attached to the uterine wall. In a healthy pregnancy, levels rise fast during the first trimester.

## 86pc

The chance of a successful pregnancy for women who have the highest levels of beta-human chorionic gonadotropin

Researchers found women with the highest rates of the hormone had an 86 per cent chance of a successful pregnancy, when scanned eight weeks later. This dropped to a two per cent chance among those with the lowest levels, the study by GCRM, part of The Fertility Partnership, found.

Experts at the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology conference in Geneva said the test would help patients.

Dr Marco Gaudoin, the medical director at GCRM, said: "Couples undergoing IVF wait two weeks to discover if they have conceived, yet for some this will not lead to a live birth. The [hormone] level gives us a clear guide, helping us to counsel patients about the likelihood of a miscarriage which, in turn, will help us to better prepare patients psychologically and emotionally."

Ruth Bender-Atik, the national director of the Miscarriage Association, said: "These results mean that IVF patients and clinicians now have the opportunity to learn more about the likely outcome of treatment beyond the joyful news of a positive pregnancy test. That development is to be welcomed as long as it is managed sensitively."