**Doing shift work 'makes it harder for women to get pregnant'**

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**Shift workers and women who have physically demanding jobs could find it harder to get pregnant, a new study suggests.**

Scientists found working outside of normal office hours or having a job which is demanding on the body may lower a woman’s chances of conceiving via IVF.

The US-based study looked at 473 women attending a [fertility](http://www.standard.co.uk/topic/fertility) clinic and was published in the journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

Women with physically demanding jobs had a lower ovarian reserve – the number of remaining eggs - than those whose work did not regularly involve heavy lifting.

Among those going through IVF at the clinic, women with more physical jobs had a lower total reserve of eggs and fewer mature eggs.

Women who worked evenings, nights or rotating shifts had fewer mature eggs than those working normal hours.

But the researchers warned the study is observational, so no firm conclusions can be drawn about cause and effect.

They said the findings were drawn from a sample of women attending a fertility clinic so may not apply to those trying to conceive naturally.

Professor Adam Balen, chairman of the British Fertility Society, said: "In this interesting study, an association has been shown between physically demanding jobs and lower potential fertility.

"It is difficult to hypothesise a mechanism by which a physically demanding job may have a negative effect on ovarian reserve, as the number of eggs (oocytes) is determined at birth and lost progressively throughout life, with smoking having been shown to be the main toxin that significantly diminishes ovarian reserve.

"It is important to note that there was no difference in smoking status between the groups.

"I wonder therefore if there may have been maternal influences on the women studied that could have effected their ovarian reserve at birth, for example maternal smoking and nutrition, which might then have some bearing on the future reproductive health of their daughters."