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**Miscarriage trauma 'persists after successful birth'**

**The trauma of miscarriage does not end with a healthy baby, but continues for up to three years after a successful birth, a study has found.**

Up to a fifth of pregnancies end in miscarriage while 0.5 per cent result in stillbirth.

A common perception is that women overcome their psychological effects with the subsequent birth of a healthy child.

But an analysis of 13,000 British women, found that the 2,800 who had suffered a miscarriage or stillbirth were much more likely to be anxious or depressed during their next pregnancy - and after the birth.

This state of mind persisted for nearly three years after they gave birth to a healthy baby, found researchers.

The findings are published today (THUR) online in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*.

The women were drawn from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), which follows 14,000 women in the Bristol area who were pregnant in 1991 and 1992.

Professor Jean Golding, founder of ALSPAC and one of the report's authors, said: "This study is important to the families of women who have lost a baby, since it is so often assumed that they get over the event quickly, yet as shown here, many do not.

"This has implications for the medical profession as well as the woman and her family."

Dr Emma Robertson Blackmore of Rochester University in the US, who led the study, said: "This finding is important because, when assessing if a women is at risk of antenatal or postnatal depression, previous pregnancy loss is usually not taken into account in the same way as other risk factors such as a family history of depression, stressful life events or a lack of social support."

Miscarriage is defined as the loss of a baby before 24 weeks and stillbirth the loss after 24 weeks.

Between 50 and 80 per cent of women who experience pregnancy loss become pregnant again.

Louise Silverton, deputy general secretary of the Royal College of Midwives, said the study "underlines the need for midwives to be able to spend time with women to discuss their pregnancy and their worries and fears".