

### Magnesium supplementation in pregnancy

To the Editors: It was with great interest that we read the paper of Sibai et al. (Sibai BM, Villar MA, Bray B. Magnesium supplementation during pregnancy: a double-blind randomized controlled clinical trial. *AM J OBSTET GYNECOL* 1989;161:115-9).

In view of the difference in results between this study and our own<sup>1</sup> it is regrettable that the authors have not adequately outlined some major differences in study design:

**Table I.** Differences in the results of the Sibai study becoming significant with a 10-fold increased population

	<i>p Value</i>
Birth weight	<0.005
Placental weight	<0.002
Small for dates	<0.05
Apgar score at 5 min < 7	<0.05

1. The study of Sibai et al. compares a low-dose versus a high-dose magnesium supplementation, whereas in our study no magnesium supplementation was compared with a high dose.

2. The study group of Sibai et al. was restricted to young primigravid women to have patients at higher risk of preeclampsia.

3. Furthermore, magnesium supplementation was started at a later state in pregnancy, 17.8 in average versus 13.3 weeks in our study.

If the authors find an extrapolation to a study population 10 times the one used acceptable to rule out statistical significance in the difference of frequency of preterm labor in the two groups, they should have applied the same approach to other parameters and would have found significant differences in favor of the high magnesium group (Table I).

It should be clearly stated that Sibai et al. did not find an effect of elevation of magnesium supplementation from 100 mg to 465 mg daily with intake started after 13 weeks' gestation in young primiparas in the prevention of the development of preeclampsia.

They certainly have not disproved our finding of beneficial effect on overall outcome of early onset high-dose magnesium supplementation in an unselected group when compared with no magnesium supplementation.

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#### REFERENCE

1. Spätling L, Spätling G. Magnesium supplementation in pregnancy. *Br J Obstet Gynaecol* 1988;95:120-5.