

Abstract

OBJECTIVES: To assess the maternal age trend in pregnant women in Flanders, Belgium, and examine the impact of maternal age on maternal mortality. **STUDY DESIGN:** Retrospective analysis of a population based regional perinatal database during one decade. **RESULTS:** Between 1991 and 2000 a significant increase in maternal age was found, in primiparous as well as in multiparous women. The maternal mortality ratio was 5.8, and strongly related to maternal age, with a relative risk of 7.0 (95% CI: 3.0-16.2) from the age of 35 on, and of 30.0 (95% CI: 11.4-80.6) in women aged 40 years or beyond. **CONCLUSIONS:** These data call for further research and action to facilitate career and reproduction, and for special care for older pregnant women.