ELEVATED MATERNAL HAEMOGLOBIN IN THE THIRD TRIMESTER: A MARKER OF ADVERSE PREGNANCY OUTCOMES?
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There is a drop in haemoglobin during pregnancy due to red cell dilution. Pregnancy itself places a huge demand on maternal iron stores. High haemoglobin may reflect haemoconcentration due to a failure of the normal physiological expansion in plasma volume. In current practice, high maternal haemoglobin in pregnancy is not given as much attention as anaemia. This study examines the association between high maternal haemoglobin in the third trimester and neonatal birth weights as well as other adverse pregnancy outcomes.

OBJECTIVES
To determine the association between elevated third trimester maternal haemoglobin and small for gestational age (SGA) neonates.

METHODS
Women delivering at the Aga Khan University Hospital’s maternity unit who had either normal or high haemoglobin levels in their third trimester of pregnancy were recruited at delivery. Information about the pregnancy outcome was then recorded for analysis. The primary outcome measure was SGA.

RESULTS
No difference was found in the proportions of SGA between mothers with elevated haemoglobin and those with normal haemoglobin [9.9% 95% CI (7.4 to 13.1) and 9.7% 95% CI (6.5 to 13.8) respectively]. Similarly no difference was detected in maternal hypertension, mode of delivery as well as other neonatal outcomes, though the study was not powered to detect differences in these outcomes.

CONCLUSION
There is evidence of no association between elevated maternal haemoglobin in the third trimester and SGA in this study population.