

Original article by Sara Wickham can be found at <http://www.sarawickham.com/research-updates/a-bit-of-good-news-for-older-mums/>

A bit of good news for older mums...



I speak to many older mums and mums-to-be who are really tired of hearing fear-based, anxiety-generating statements about the risks of older mumhood, and it's partly because of this that I was really happy to read [a recent study in Population and Development Review](#) which offers more evidence highlighting one of the advantages (rather than another alleged disadvantage) of being an older parent.

Barclay and Myrskylä (2016) compared babies born to older mums with their siblings

who were born when their mums were younger. They used data from Sweden but argue that the effects that they saw “*are likely to extend to other countries where health has been improving and educational access has been expanding, such as the United States and much of Europe*” (69).

Their paper is long and detailed but the key bits that I think will be of interest to readers of this blog are these:

“The research documenting these negative child outcomes, however, neglects the potential benefits of being born at a later date. For many important outcomes such as health and educational attainment, secular trends across the OECD countries are positive, so being born into a later birth cohort would appear to be beneficial.” (Barclay and Myrskylä 2016: 69)

“In absolute terms, offspring who are born to an older mother in contemporary Sweden and survive to adulthood do better than their older siblings who were born when their mother was at her peak level of reproductive health.” (Barclay and Myrskylä 2016: 89)

So older mums and mums-to-be can be reassured that it's not a completely one-sided picture.

If you're interested, you [can read the full study here](#).

Barclay K and Myrskylä M (2016) Advanced Maternal Age and Offspring Outcomes: Reproductive Aging and Counterbalancing Period Trends. [Population and Development Review 42\(1\): 69-94](#).

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