Work activities and risk of prematurity, low birth weight and pre-eclampsia: an updated review with meta-analysis

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▶ Additional material is published online only. To view please visit the journal online (http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/oemed-2012-101032).

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Received 02 July 2012
Revised 19 November 2012
Accepted 08 December 2012
Published Online First 23 January 2013

ABSTRACT

Objectives We assessed the evidence relating preterm delivery (PTD), low birth weight, small for gestational age (SGA), pre-eclampsia and gestational hypertension to five occupational exposures (working hours, shift work, lifting, standing and physical workload). We conducted a systematic search in Medline and Embase (1966 to 2011), updating a previous search with a further 6 years of observations.

Methods As before, combinations of keywords and medical subject headings were used. Each relevant paper was assessed for completeness of reporting and potential for important bias or confounding, and its effect estimates abstracted. Where similar definitions of exposure and outcome existed we calculated pooled estimates of relative risk (RR) in meta-analysis.

Results Analysis was based on 86 reports (32 cohort investigations, 57 with usable data on PTD, 54 on birth weight and 11 on pre-eclampsia/gestational hypertension); 33 reports were new to this review. For PTD, findings across a substantial evidence base were generally consistent, effectively ruling out large effects (eg, RR>1.2). Larger and higher quality studies were less positive, while meta-estimates of risk were smaller than in previous analyses and best estimates pointed to modest or null effects (RR 1.04 to 1.18). For SGA, the position was similar but meta-estimates were even closer to the null (eight of nine RRs≤1.07). For pre-eclampsia/gestational hypertension the evidence base remains insufficient.

Conclusions The balance of evidence is against large effects for the associations investigated. As the evidence base has grown, estimates of risk in relation to these outcomes have become smaller.

What this paper adds

- In theory, physical activities at work could adversely affect outcomes of pregnancy. However, an earlier systematic review indicated that long working hours, shift work, prolonged standing, heavy lifting and high physical workload have limited impact on risks of preterm delivery and low birth weight/small for gestational age (SGA).
- This review adds 33 more reports, increases the available number of effect estimates by some 30–50%, and allows additional meta-estimates of risk.
- For preterm delivery and SGA the substantially enlarged evidence base provides greater confidence that any risks from these activities are, at most, small.
- For pre-eclampsia and gestational hypertension the available evidence remains limited.

In the UK, as in most parts of the world, women make up a substantial proportion of the workforce (50% in 2010[1]). Almost 70% of women work through their reproductive years,[2] amounting to some 350 000 pregnant workers in any 1 year.[3] The impetus and legal onus to assess health and safety risks to pregnant workers, and where possible to minimise them, is thus considerable.

As strategies have evolved to manage the risks associated with well-established but uncommon reproductive hazards (eg, ionising radiation, lead), so attention has turned to everyday occupational exposures, relating to working hours, shift work, standing, lifting and physical workload.

In theory, such common exposures could affect the outcomes of pregnancy. For example, disrupted circadian rhythms from shift working could trigger neuroendocrine changes that affect fetal growth and timing of parturition, while raised noradrenaline levels from heavy physical exertion could increase uterine contractility and risks of preterm labour. Set against this, however, considerable physiological adaptations to the demands of pregnancy tend to preserve constant fetal oxygen consumption, and a growing body of evidence suggests that moderate physical exercise in pregnancy can be beneficial;[4–7] several authoritative clinical bodies now recommend it.[8 9]

Previously[10] we reviewed the evidence (to December 2005) relating five common occupational exposures (prolonged working hours, shift work, lifting, standing, and heavy physical workload) to five clinically important adverse outcomes of pregnancy (preterm delivery, small for gestational age (SGA), low birth weight (LBW), pre-eclampsia and gestational hypertension). Subsequently, a request by the Royal College of Physicians of London to prepare national clinical guidelines on pregnancy and work afforded us the opportunity to update our search over several more years in a surprisingly active area of research inquiry. We report here on the considerably enlarged body of evidence, and present new meta-estimates of effect for exposures and outcomes of interest.

METHODS

Search strategy

Previously we conducted a systematic search in Medline and EMBASE from 1966 to December

To cite: Palmer KT, Bonzini M, Harris EC, *et al*. *Occup Environ Med* 2013;**70**:213–222.

2005,[10] with a partial update in Medline in respect of shift work to February 2010.[11] For this review the same search strategy was run in both databases to provide complete coverage from 1966 to 31 December 2011, adding 6 more years of data.

As before, medical subject headings and key words representing each outcome and exposure of interest were combined. The medical subject headings used were: pregnancy, reproductive health, pre-eclampsia, infant-premature, labour-premature, birth weight, gestational age, SGA, fetal growth retardation, labour complications, pregnancy complications (as outcomes); and lifting, work schedule tolerance, exercise, fatigue, work, workload, employment and occupational exposure (as exposures). Several simple search terms also supplemented the inquiry: occupational activity, standing, manual lifting, heavy lifting and shift work (as exposures). Searches were limited to papers with an abstract in English. Titles and abstracts were examined and all potentially relevant primary reports and reviews were obtained. The references of retrieved papers and a major report in the area by the Royal College of Physicians of London and NHS Plus,[12] published since our last review, were also checked for relevant material. These procedures and the steps below were replicated independently by two of us and differences were resolved by consensus. Papers finally included were those which compared an exposed with a less heavily or unexposed reference group for at least one exposure-outcome combination of interest and which provided estimates of effect or the data to calculate these.

Data abstraction

Details were abstracted from each relevant paper on the study populations, setting, timing of investigation, study design, exposure contrasts, methods for assessment of exposure(s) and outcome(s), response rates, confounders considered and estimates of effect. Where a paper provided frequencies but not estimates of relative risk (RR), ORs with exact 95%CIs were calculated using STATA software. Similarly, where birth weight was presented as a continuous measure, with group means and standard deviations, the mean difference between exposure groups was calculated with 95%CIs. Where several sub-analyses were presented, analysis focussed on exposure contrasts that were most comparable across studies.

Quality assessment

Each paper was rated for completeness of reporting and each exposure-outcome permutation for its potential for significant confounding or 'inflationary' bias, as defined previously.[10] In brief, completeness of reporting was graded according to nine items that were clearly defined (study design, sampling frame and procedures, inclusion/exclusion criteria, main characteristics of the study population, numbers and response rates, method(s) of assessment of exposure and of outcome, method of analysis, measures of association with 95% CI and numbers in the analysis): studies for which three or more than three items were missing or unclear were classed as poorer in information quality. Potentially important confounders were identified from among risk factors that were reasonably prevalent, unlikely to reflect the effects of occupational exposure or lie on the causal pathway between exposure and health, and which carried a reasonable RR (the choice of confounders varied by outcome as described below). 'Inflationary' bias (bias that could cause important overestimation of RRs) was considered most likely when exposures were self-reported retrospectively (especially if of a type difficult to recall), and were being related to outcomes that were self-reported or were clearly adverse. Thus, retrospective studies with self-reported exposures were assigned one point for each of: (1) self-reported outcome; (2) outcome of pre-eclampsia, gestational hypertension, or LBW; (3) exposure related to physical workload (standing, lifting, activity score). Exposure-outcome pairings were scored 0 to 3, and scores ≥ 2 were considered indicative for potential inflationary bias. By these criteria, exposure-outcome combinations were counted as of poorer quality if they had significant potential for confounding or bias or came from studies with incomplete reporting. In summarising findings, we also distinguished risk estimates based on >1000 deliveries from smaller analyses. (With an α of <0.05, this cut-point should provide a $\geq$95% power to detect an OR in case-control studies of 2.0 for exposures such as working >40 h/week and shift work 'most of the time', and a RR in cohort studies of 2.0 for preterm delivery and SGA (details available on request)).

Meta-analysis

For studies with similar definitions of exposure and outcome, pooled estimates of RR were calculated by weighting log RRs or log ORs by the inverse of their variances. Meta-analysis was performed using the Sharp and Sterne STATA macro. A fixed effects model was chosen unless there was evidence of heterogeneity ($p<0.1$), whereupon a random effects (DerSimonian-Laird) model was selected instead. Overall meta-estimates for possible exposure-outcome combinations were computed and also a sensitivity analysis excluding papers of lower quality. Where possible, estimates were also made for occupational exposures continuing into the second or third trimesters of pregnancy. Where studies provided estimates of effect for several trimesters, the estimate earliest in pregnancy was used for the overall analysis and that latest in pregnancy for the second and third trimester analysis.

RESULTS

Our earlier review identified 53 reports (covering 49 studies).[13–65] The updated search, together with a review of the bibliographies of published papers, identified a further 33 reports[66–98] relating to 30 studies—in all, 86 reports, 57 with usable data on preterm delivery, 54 on birth weight (including SGA) and 11 concerning pre-eclampsia or gestational hypertension (some reports covered several exposures and/or outcomes). The additional material comprised 28 reports published after the index date in December 2005[66–93] and five[94–98] from before it identified from citations in papers retrieved by this search.

For reasons of parsimony, we tabulate here only a descriptive summary of risk estimates across the full material (1966 to December 2011), overall and for larger higher quality studies (table 1), and associated meta-estimates where these could be derived (table 2). Online supplementary tables S1–S7 provide a complete listing, covering the design features of all 79 studies, our assessment of their study quality, and associated risk estimates from the 86 reports, enumerated separately by pregnancy outcome. Unless otherwise stated, our description of the findings and discussion cover the entire search period.

Identified studies covered 27 countries, a third of reports coming from the USA and a third from Europe. In general, reports had satisfactory completeness of reporting by our criteria. However, for 20/79 (25%) studies the score was ≤ 6.

Sample sizes varied from small (<50) to extremely large (>350 000), but 57% of the 353 effect estimates across both reviews (see online supplementary tables S1–S7) were based on findings from >1000 births. Response rates at baseline (cross-sectional studies) or follow-up (cohort studies) often exceeded 80–90%, but

Table 1 Descriptive summary of the associations between reviewed activities and pregnancy outcomes (1966–2011)*

	All studies				Higher quality larger studies†			
Outcome/exposure	N Studies	Median (IQR)	Range	N estimates (RR≥2.0/all estimates)	N Studies	Median (IQR)	Range	N estimates (RR≥2.0/all estimates)
Preterm delivery (RR)								
Working hours	25	1.18 (1.00 to 1.34)	0.30 to 3.69	2/30	11	1.10 (1.01 to 1.21)	0.30 to 1.60	0/15
Shift work	21	1.10 (0.67 to 1.60)	0.67 to 5.60	3/33	9	1.03 (0.94 to 1.16)	0.67 to 1.80	0/19
Standing	28	1.16 (1.00 to 1.35)	0.58 to 4.10	3/36	10	1.09 (0.92 to 1.23)	0.76 to 1.69	0/12
Lifting	17	1.12 (0.90 to 1.30)	0.55 to 2.91	1/22	11	1.02 (0.90 to 1.30)	0.55 to 1.49	0/15
Physical activity	33	1.20 (1.10 to 1.70)	0.71 to 4.10	4/35	8	1.10 (1.04 to 1.16)	0.87 to 1.25	0/9
SGA (RR)								
Working hours	14	1.10 (1.00 to 1.27)	0.80 to 2.10	1/18	6	1.10 (1.00 to 1.10)	0.99 to 1.19	0/9
Shift work	11	1.25 (0.94 to 1.49)	0.70 to 3.31	2/18	6	1.00 (0.92 to 1.25)	0.70 to 1.50	0/11
Standing	12	1.00 (0.93 to 1.26)	0.86 to 2.00	1/17	4	1.06 (0.98 to 1.24)	0.89 to 1.42	0/4
Lifting	7	1.03 (0.73 to 1.15)	0.50 to 1.20	0/11	4	1.08 (1.04 to 1.17)	0.65 to 1.20	0/6
Physical activity	13	1.00 (0.82 to 1.38)	0.70 to 2.40	2/14	5	0.88 (0.81 to 1.00)	0.76 to 1.20	0/6
Low birth weight (RR)								
Working hours	8	1.34 (1.20 to 1.65)	0.96 to 1.80	0/10	0	–	–	-
Shift work	7	1.28 (1.02 to 1.47)	0.71 to 2.10	1/9	1	–	1.02	0/1
Standing	9	1.13 (0.70 to 1.58)	0.50 to 1.92	0/13	1	–	0.5	0/1
Lifting	7	1.10 (0.70 to 1.26)	0.50 to 2.40	1/9	3	0.75 (0.73 to 1.58)	0.70 to 2.40	1/3
Physical activity	10	1.13 (1.04 to 1.80)	0.60 to 4.32	2/11	1	–	0.99 to 1.13	0/2
Birth weight (gms diff)								
Working hours	7	−60 (−74 to 7)	−84 to −32	(N=9)	3	−45 (−53 to 44)	−60 to 43	(N=3)
Shift work	6	10 (−273 to 39)	−438 to 195	(N=13)	1	37 (21 to 57)	2 to 91	(N=4)
Standing	8	−25 (−31 to 0.5)	−49 to 20	(N=11)	3	−36 (−42 to 29)	−49 to 18	(N=4)
Lifting	3	−21 (−24 to 11)	−44 to 19	(N=8)	0	–	–	–
Physical activity	8	−59 (−148 to 29)	−216 to 183	(N=14)	2	–	−21 to 51	(N=2)
Pregnancy-induced hypertension								
Working hours	5	1.10 (0.85 to 1.10)	0.76 to 1.18	0/5	1	–	0.76	0/1
Shift work	2	–	0.90 to 1.10	0/2	0	–	–	–
Standing	4	1.05 (0.93 to 1.14)	0.70 to 1.26	0/4	1	–	1.26	0/1
Lifting	2	–	1.10 to 1.10	0/2	0	–	–	–
Physical activity	4	1.15 (1.00 to 1.77)	0.70 to 3.47	1/4	0	–	–	–
Pre-eclampsia								
Working hours	2	–	0.96 to 1.20	0/2	1	–	0.96	0/1
Shift work	2	–	1.00 to 1.30	0/2	1	–	1.30	0/1
Standing	4	0.77 (0.72 to 1.34)	0.70 to 2.90	1/4	1	–	0.72	0/1
Lifting	3	1.1	0.68 to 1.70	0/3	0	–	–	–
Physical activity	3	0.75	0.70 to 2.10	1/3	0	–	–	–

*See online supplementary tables S1 to S7 for a complete listing of the reports and associated risk estimates summarised in this table.
†After excluding estimates with higher potential for bias or confounding, involving <1000 deliveries, or from incompletely reported studies.
RR, relative risk; SGA, small for gestational age

Table 2 Relationship between working hours, standing, shift work and two pregnancy outcomes (preterm delivery and small for gestational age): meta-estimates of relative risk (1966–2011)*

	Working hours (> vs <40 h/ week)		Standing (>4 vs <4 h/day)		Shift work (Yes vs No)	
	N	RR (95% CI)	N	RR (95% CI)	N	RR (95% CI)
Preterm delivery						
Overall meta-estimate	17	1.23 (1.13 to 1.34)	12	1.22 (1.12 to 1.33)	19	1.14 (1.01 to 1.30)
Sensitivity analysis†	11	1.18 (1.05 to 1.33)	7	1.13 (0.99 to 1.29)	12	1.04 (0.94 to 1.15)
Later pregnancy	6	1.17 (0.94 to 1.45)	7	1.15 (0.96 to 1.37)	8	1.17 (0.86 to 1.60)
SGA						
Overall meta-estimate	8	1.04 (0.94 to 1.16)	7	1.07 (0.94 to 1.22)	10	1.01 (0.92 to 1.10)
Sensitivity analysis†	6	0.99 (0.88 to 1.11)	5	1.16 (0.97 to 1.38)	7	0.98 (0.90 to 1.08)
Later pregnancy	4	0.99 (0.83 to 1.19)	5	0.95 (0.76 to 1.20)	5	1.05 (0.94 to 1.18)

*See online supplementary tables S1 and S2 for details of the reports and risk estimates incorporated into these meta-analyses.
†Excluding studies with a higher potential for bias or confounding, or which reported incompletely.
RR, relative risk; SGA, small for gestational age

were <65% or unclear in 21 reports.[25 26 32 34 35 37 47 51–54 59 65 79 85 87 89 90 92 93 98]

In 29 cohort investigations, occupational history was determined during pregnancy and in three others[64 71 77] by record linkage; for the remaining studies information on work exposures was obtained after delivery, mostly through self-report, but in a minority[26 27 39 44 47 59 77 80 82 90] using job title as a surrogate index. Issues of measurement error in exposure assessment were seldom considered, only a few studies employed personal diaries to assist self-reporting, and about 40% of studies did not report the timing of exposures during pregnancy. Most studies of working hours, standing and shift work employed similar exposure definitions. However, definitions for lifting and physical workload differed materially between studies.

With few exceptions health outcomes were established objectively (from hospital records, registers or birth certificates).

Various strategies were used to control for confounding (matching, restriction, stratification, regression modelling), but confounding was ignored altogether in some investigations. Roughly 40% of exposure-outcome pairings carried higher potential for inflationary bias or confounding according to our criteria.

Preterm delivery

Case definition

Most reports adopted the WHO definition for preterm delivery: 'the birth of a living fetus before 37 completed weeks of gestation'.

Potential confounding factors

Many maternal characteristics have been associated with an increased risk of preterm delivery (eg, previous preterm delivery, multiple gestation, diabetes, pre-eclampsia, bacterial vaginosis, extremes of maternal age), but few such factors are common *and* carry a high RR and some (eg, obstetric events in previous pregnancies) could have arisen from previous work exposures. Smoking and lower social class carry moderate RRs (1.5–2.0) and are prevalent exposures whose frequency could vary systematically by occupational activity. Risk estimates that failed to take account of both of these variables (or proxies of them—eg, lower educational attainment or income) were classed as having higher potential for confounding.

Scope for meta-analysis

Formal meta-analysis was feasible for associations of preterm delivery with working hours (>40 h/week vs less), shift work (Yes vs No) and standing (>4 h/day vs less). For lifting and physical workload, definitions of exposure were too heterogeneous to justify being combined.

Working hours

The relation of working hours to preterm delivery was considered in 25 studies,[16 18 19 21 25 28 32 35 37 44 45 51–54 60 71 72 76 79 81 84 86 87 97] including nine cohort investigations. These provided 30 estimates of RR, the median RR being 1.18 (and 1.10 in 11 large studies of higher quality). In only 2 of 30 estimates, was the RR ≥2.0.[84 87] One of these studies was unusual in its focus on exposure to anaesthetic gases and infective risks,[87] and both were small relative to the field (<750 births), with correspondingly wide 95% CIs. By contrast, the eight largest studies (>2000 births)[19 37 51 53 71 76 79 81] all had RRs≤1.34. A pooled RR of 1.23 (95% CI 1.13 to 1.34) (figure 1) was derived from 17 studies that compared work for at least 40 h per week with shorter hours.[18 19 21 25 35 44 53 54 71 72 76 79 81 84 86 87 97] For the subset of 11 studies judged of higher methodological rigour,[18 19 21 44 54 72 76 79 81 84 87] the meta-RR was somewhat lower (1.18 (95%CI 1.05 to 1.33)), while the meta-estimate for exposure continuing into later pregnancy was close to this second value.

Shift work

Twenty-one studies[16 21 23 32 35 37 40 42 45 51 53 57 63 64 68 70 72 73 76 81 84] were found that considered the association of preterm delivery with shift work (usually defined either as shift or night work), including nine cohort investigations. Together these provided 33 estimates of effect. In two-thirds the point estimate of RR was near or below unity, although in nine studies[16 32 35 45 57 63 68 73 84] the RR was ≥1.5 and in three of these[16 63 68] risks were elevated ≥2.0. Among these, one study focussed primarily on exposure to anaesthetic gases in midwives[16] and was an outlying observation. A second involved exposure to shift working and to self-reported undefined 'physical and chemical hazards'.[68] This and a third study of textile workers[63] were relatively small (<1000 births). Among the seven largest studies of shift working and preterm delivery,[21 37 53 64 73 76 81] each involving >4000 births, 13 of 14 RRs were ≤1.18. The median estimate of RR across all studies was 1.10, but only 1.03 in the nine larger better quality studies; the

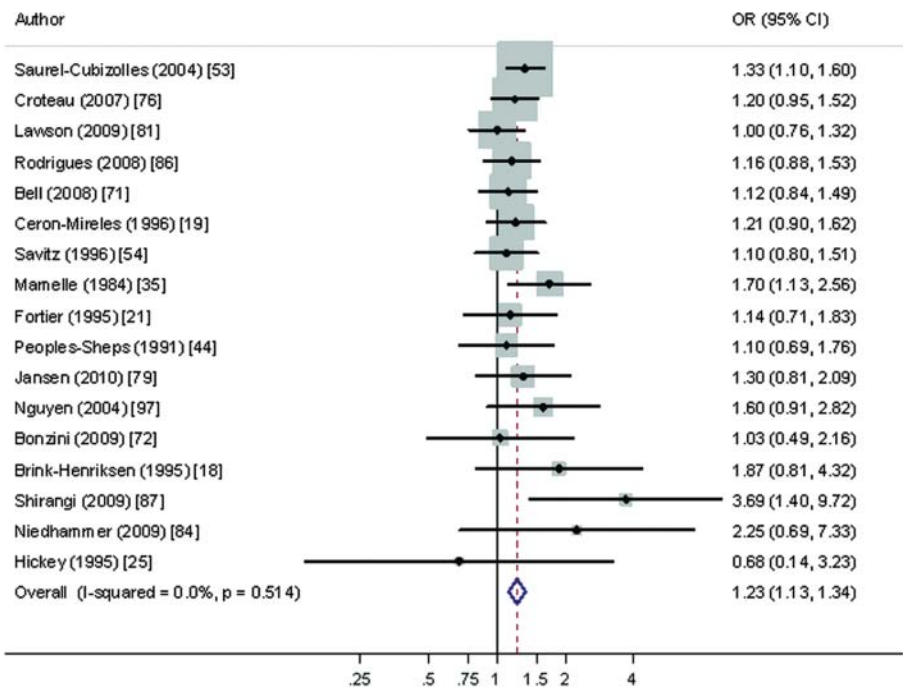

Figure 1 Risk of preterm delivery associated with working >40 h per week during pregnancy (Forest plot ordered by study size).

meta-estimate (based on 19 studies[16 21 23 32 35 40 42 45 51 53 57 63 64 70 72 73 76 81 84]) was 1.14 (figure 2), and that for the 12 studies that met our criteria for higher quality[21 40 42 45 57 63 64 72 73 76 81 84] was 1.04 (95% CI 0.94 to 1.15).

Standing

Twenty-eight studies[15 18 19 21 23 25 29 31–33 35 37 40 41 45 51–53 59 60 68 70 72 76 81 85 86 98] which considered standing and preterm delivery, including 12 of cohort design, provided 36 estimates of effect. 'High' exposure was defined as standing for ≥4 h/day in 12 studies.[17 21 29 32 33 45 53 60 68 72 76 81] Risk estimates exceeded 1.5 in eight studies,[31–33 35 41 52 59 98] of which three reported RRs≥2.0.[32 59 98] Of these three, two[32 98] were of lower quality, in part because exposures were self-reported after delivery and two[59 98] were small (<750 births). In the 10 largest studies (>2000 births),[18 19 21 29 31 37 51 53 76 81] 10 of the 11 effect estimates were ≤1.31. The overall median estimate of RR was 1.16 and 1.09 in larger and better quality studies. The meta-estimate (based on 12 studies) was 1.22 (figure 3), and that for the seven studies[18 21 29 33 60 72 76] of higher quality was 1.13 (95% CI 0.99 to 1.29).

Lifting

The relation between occupational lifting and preterm delivery was examined in 17 studies,[13 15 18 21 33 37 40 45 51–53

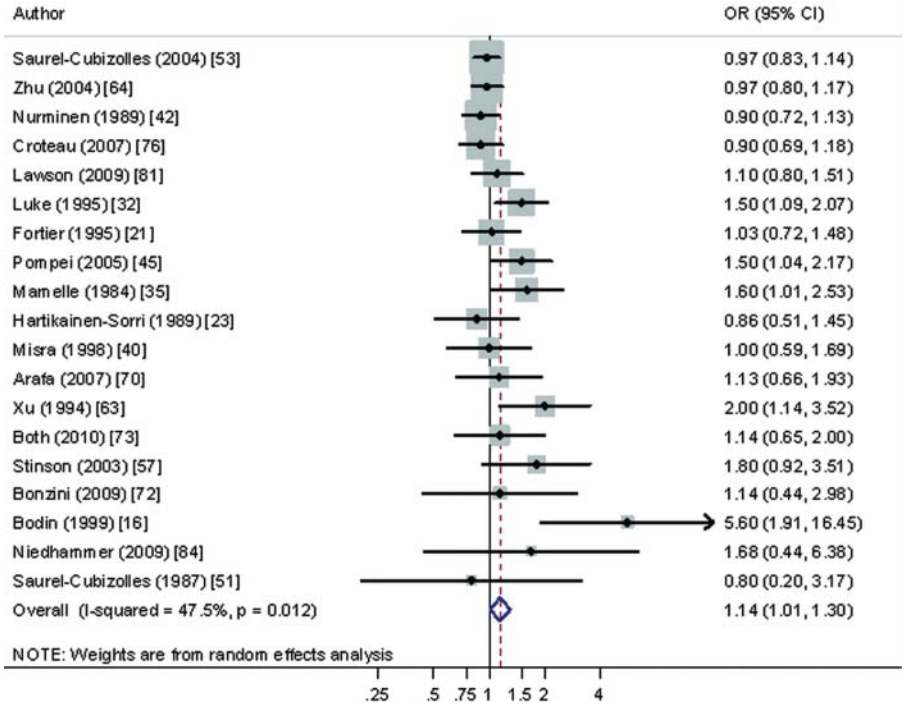

Figure 2 Risk of preterm delivery associated with working shifts during pregnancy (Forest plot ordered by study size).

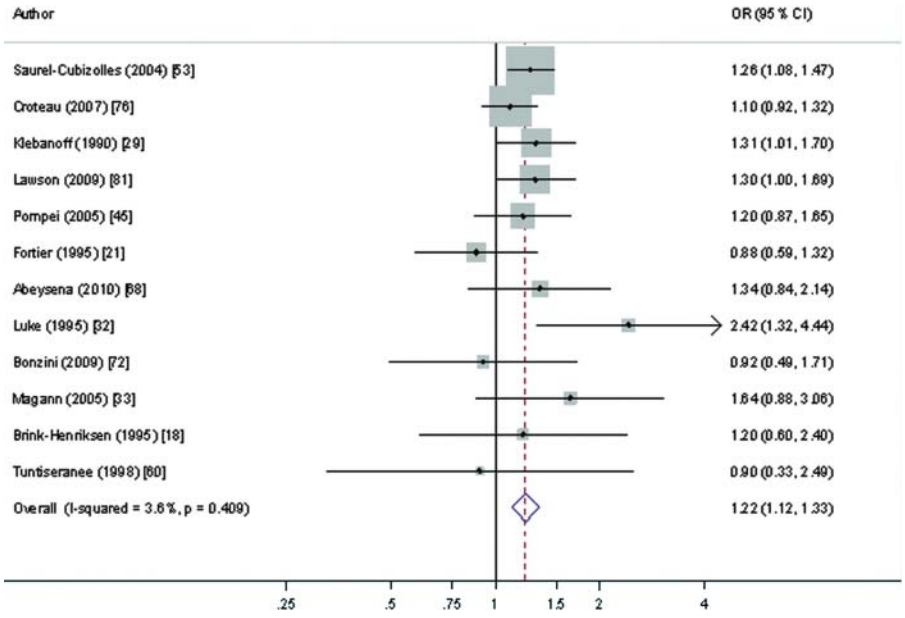

Figure 3 Risk of preterm delivery associated with standing at work for >4 h per day during pregnancy (Forest plot ordered by study size).

[60 72 76 81 89 98] including eight prospective investigations. Studies differed substantially in their definition of exposure. Twenty-two effect estimates were reported, the median overall being 1.12. In only one of 22 estimates was the RR >2.0;[98] this study was rated as more susceptible to confounding and was also relatively small (<500 births). In the 11 higher quality studies with >1000 births,[13 18 21 37 40 45 53 60 72 76 89] the median value was 1.02 (IQR 0.90–1.30).

Physical workload

Thirty-three studies,[19 21 23 25 26 29 31 32 34 35 37 41 43 44 47 48 50–52 57 60 69 71 77 80 82–86 90 94 97] including 12 of cohort design, investigated the link between physical workload and preterm delivery and provided 35 risk estimates. Exposure was defined variously. For example, six studies[25 32 35 37 41 57] used an occupational fatigue score proposed by Mamelle *et al*, comprising a combination of standing >1 h/day, work on a machine, carrying loads >10 kg, mental stress and chemical or physical exposures at work; while other studies used a physical workload score, calculated as an estimated daily energy expenditure or by grouping self-estimates of physical exertion.

The median effect estimate was 1.20. In 4 of 35 estimates the RR was >2.0. These came from three studies of relatively small size (<800 births),[50 51 83] two of which were classified as having higher potential for confounding.[50 51] In the six largest studies (>3000 births),[29 31 37 71 77 82] the highest risk estimate was 1.16, the median value being 1.10 (IQR 1.07–1.11). Self-reporting of a subjective exposure (eg, 'heavy' workload) is more than usually susceptible to reporting bias, so ideally occupational history would be taken before pregnancy outcome. The 12 prospective studies[25 29 31 34 41 48 57 60 71 77 84 97] gave a median RR of 1.16; but this provides only a limited guide as 7 of the 12 relevant estimates came from small studies (<650 births). The median RR for higher quality studies with >1000 births was 1.10.

Birth weight

Case definition

The 53 identified reports on LBW used three different approaches to define outcome: birth weight as a continuous measure, birth weight below a threshold (usually 2500 g), or SGA by a cut-point on an expected distribution (usually the 10th centile). Several papers presented results for several outcomes and where birth weight was adjusted for gestational age, risk estimates tended if anything to be lower, suggesting that associations with unadjusted birth weight partly reflected effects on gestation. This account therefore focuses on the 24 studies that provided information on occupational risks of SGA,[16 19 21 22 28 31 33 34 42 45 54 56 60 64 66 70–72 75 77 79 84 88 91] though additional results (from 38 reports) for other measures of birth weight are presented in the online supplementary tables.

Potential confounders

Major risk factors for intrauterine growth retardation in developed countries include smoking, small maternal stature, suboptimal nutrition and low maternal weight gain; but among these, poor maternal weight gain could lie on the causal pathway between occupational exposures and SGA, while lower socioeconomic status is a proxy for poorer nutrition. Risk estimates were therefore classified as having higher potential for confounding if they failed to take account of smoking and ≥1 of: socioeconomic status, maternal height or prepregnancy weight.

Scope for meta-analysis

A meta-estimate of risk of SGA was calculated in relation to working hours (>40 h/week vs less), standing (>4 h/day vs less) and shift work (Yes vs No); but exposure definitions for lifting and physical workload were too heterogeneous to be combined.

Working hours

Fourteen studies[16 19 21 28 45 54 56 60 71 72 75 79 84 88] (seven of cohort design), all but three of higher quality, considered weekly working hours and SGA, providing 18 estimates of effect. The median RR was 1.10. In only one of 18 estimates was the RR≥2.0—in a relatively small study (<1000 births) with higher potential for confounding.[60] 'High' exposure mostly entailed working for ≥40 h/week and in eight studies[16 19 21 51 71 72 75 79 84] with the exposure that could be combined in meta-analysis the estimated RR was 1.04 (95% CI 0.94 to 1.16) overall, and 0.99 (95% CI 0.88 to 1.11) in six

studies of higher quality. The estimated effect from this exposure continuing beyond the first trimester was below 1.0.

The median estimated RR for LBW (1.34), based on 10 estimates from eight reports,[16 24 37 44 51 60 84 92] was somewhat higher than for SGA, but 7 of the 10 estimates derived from smaller studies (<1000 births) and the three larger studies[16 44 51] were deemed more susceptible than average to confounding. None of the 10 estimated RRs was as much as doubled.

Online supplementary table S6 summarises the outcome in relation to birth weight measured continuously. All seven studies[16 24 28 62 79 88 95] found a lower birth weight in women working longer (median 60 gms, range 32–84 gms). Most studies were small (four had≤250 births), but in the two largest studies,[79 88] rated of better quality and prospective birth weights were on average about 45 gm lower in women with longer working hours.

Shift work

Eleven studies[16 21 22 42 45 64 66 70 72 75 84] (eight of higher quality) reported on shift work and SGA. The median RR overall was 1.25 and in only one study (2 of 18 estimates) was above 2.0. This study[66] was small, had a higher potential for inflationary bias, and defined exposure in terms of shift work and the presence of self-reported 'physical or chemical hazards at work'. However, the median RR for larger higher quality studies was 1.0. The pooled estimate of risk was 1.01 (95% CI 0.92 to 1.10), and 0.98 (95% CI 0.90 to 1.08) when analysis was restricted to seven studies[21 22 45 64 72 75 84] of higher quality.

The median RR for LBW (1.28) was somewhat higher than that for SGA, but only one of nine estimates was derived from a higher quality study with >1000 births (based on a national birth cohort in Denmark[64]). In this the RR was 1.01, in keeping with meta-analytic estimates. Online supplementary table S6 also summarises the outcome in relation to birth weight measured continuously. There was a large span of results in relation to shift work, from an average loss of 438 gms at one extreme to a gain of 195 gms at the other, with a median estimated gain of 19 gms. Negative findings were particularly evident in one very small study (25–67 births) of lower quality;[14] and in the three largest studies (1685–>35 000 births)[16 64 73] shift work was associated on average with a modest gain in birth weight.

Standing

Standing and SGA were analysed in 12 studies[19 21 22 31 43 45 56 60 66 72 75 88] (five classed as higher quality) including six of cohort design. The median RR from 17 estimates of effect was 1.00 (IQR 0.93–1.26) and only one moderately sized study, from Thailand, with higher than average potential for confounding, reported a RR as high as 2.0.[60] The overall meta-estimate, assuming a cut-point of 4 h/day, was 1.07 (95% CI 0.94 to 1.22), or 1.16 in sensitivity analysis, and 0.95 for exposures at this level continuing beyond the first trimester. Four estimates came from higher quality studies analysing >1,000 births,[21 22 66 88] with a median of 1.06 (IQR 0.98–1.24).

Thirteen estimates of RR for LBW were available, from nine studies,[24 37 39 51 59 60 62 66 85] the median being 1.13, with no RR≥2.0; and there were 11 estimates of birth weight analysed continuously in women who stood at work versus those that did not (eight studies[17 24 29 59 62 65 88 94]), ranging from an average weight loss of 49 gms to a weight gain of 20 gms).

Lifting

Lifting was considered in seven studies of SGA,[13 21 33 45 60 72 75] with a median RR overall of 1.03 (IQR 0.73–1.15) and a similar value for the four studies of higher quality. All 11 estimates of effect were ≤1.2. Seven studies[13 24 37 51 60 62 89] provided evidence on LBW (see online supplementary table S5), but only one of nine estimated RRs was ≥2.0 (a cross-sectional study in which exposures were self-reported after delivery[62]). Only three studies[20 24 62] looked at birth weight assessed continuously, with mixed results (see online supplementary table S6), ranging from a mean reduction in birth weight of 44 gms to a mean gain of 18.9 gms in women with lifting duties.

Physical workload

SGA and physical workload were considered in 13 investigations,[19 21 22 31 34 43 56 60 71 77 84 88 91] including eight of cohort design. Exposures were defined diversely. The median RR was 1.00 (IQR 0.82–1.38) (based on 14 estimates) and 0.88 in higher quality studies. Two studies[43 56] reported RRs≥2.0; both were small (about 500 births) and of lower quality.

A similar median estimate of effect was found for LBW (1.13), with RRs >2.0 in two studies, both with <800 births.[26 84] Eight studies[20 24 26 29 34 48 58 88] provided 14 estimates of continuously assessed birth weight, with mixed results—a median weight loss on average of 59 g, but ranging from an average loss of 216 g to an average weight gain of 183 g.

Gestational hypertension and pre-eclampsia

Case definition

Studies subclassified pregnancy-induced hypertension in the standard way, as: (1) gestational hypertension (raised blood pressure in a previously normotensive woman after the 20th week of gestation, which resolves after delivery); or (2) pre-eclampsia (gestational hypertension with proteinuria and oedema). However, variation existed in the level of blood pressure and degree of proteinuria underlying case definitions.

Potential confounders

Among many reported risk factors for pre-eclampsia, we considered only obesity and primiparity to be common and to carry substantial RRs. Risk estimates were classified as having higher potential for confounding if they failed to take account of *both* of these variables.

Scope for meta-analysis

Because of potentially important differences in outcome definition from one study to another and a small pool of studies, we did not attempt meta-analysis for occupational associations with gestational hypertension or pre-eclampsia.

Associations with occupational activities

Eleven investigations[27 30 36 42 49 50 56 61 74 78 79] (including three cohort studies) were identified concerning gestational hypertension, pre-eclampsia and occupational activity, providing 31 estimates of effect across the five categories of work exposure. However, data were sparse when individual exposure-outcome combinations were analysed separately. For example, only two estimates of effect were found respectively for standing, shift work and lifting in relation to gestational hypertension, and only two respectively for working hours, and shift work in relation to pre-eclampsia. It may be seen, however, that median RRs, where feasible to estimate, were low (RR<1.15) and that only three studies[50 56 78] reported RRs≥2.0. In the study by Haelterman

et al[78] the exposure associated with a RR of 2.9 was standing on the spot for ≥1 h at a time, but no other study assessed standing in this way. The other two studies focussed on self-reported physical activity. All three, however, were retrospective in design and rated as of lower methodological quality, two of them were also small (<600 births)[50 56] and one was incompletely reported.[50]

DISCUSSION

This study updates an earlier review by providing an extra 6 years of observation. The number of available risk estimates increased over this time by 30–50%, depending on outcome, allowing additional meta-analyses (on SGA and separately for late pregnancy) that could not be justified a relatively short while ago. Twelve of 30 new studies involved >4000 deliveries, one with >350 000 births,[78] there were nine new cohort studies (in 12 reports), and eight new reports[66–68 72 73 75 76 91] furnished risk estimates separately for different pregnancy trimesters, adding to the six[20 24 45 46 48 54] previously identified; 40% of risk estimates were linked with a specified trimester, a much improved situation. We summarise the current evidence now as substantial for preterm delivery, reasonably large for SGA (especially when other measures of birth weight are also considered), but still small for gestational hypertension/pre-eclampsia.

Our search was restricted to publications with abstracts in English, did not extend to the 'grey' literature, and may therefore have not been perfectly comprehensive. However, it seems unlikely that many important papers will have been missed. On the other hand, the consistent finding that risk estimates were lower in the largest and better studies, with outliers confined to small studies, suggests that publication bias may be inflating estimates of risk.

Strengths of the evidence base, across most studies, include high response rates and ascertainment of outcomes independent of exposures (from objective sources such as birth records). Thus, response bias and non-differential misclassification of health endpoints is unlikely to have much affected findings. On the other hand, non-differential misclassification could still arise for exposures that are hard to characterise, with bias to the null.

Another continuing limitation in available evidence relates to the heterogeneity of exposure definitions, especially for lifting and physical workload. The challenge is not inconsiderable: lifting tasks, for example, may be classified according to their average daily frequency, duration, load and posture, and the optimum choice of metrics is not obvious; but there has been little move towards standardisation over time. This limitation impedes causal inference and risk communication, by precluding meta-regression and full assessment of exposure-response relationships.

One aspect of exposure that may be important is its timing during pregnancy. However, studies that presented risk estimates separately for different trimesters did not point to major differences, and in meta-analysis risks of preterm delivery and SGA from long working hours, standing and shift work in the second and third trimesters were not noticeably higher.

As previously, we have highlighted those studies considered most susceptible to confounding and inflationary bias (which may arise particularly if workers who have suffered an adverse pregnancy event relatively over-report exposures they perceive as hazardous). Meta-estimated RRs were somewhat lower in sensitivity analyses which excluded such studies, as were summary risk estimates for larger better quality studies, and we judge these estimates to be more reliable than those overall.

Most reports emanated from Europe and North America, but findings from developing countries (16 studies, 66 effect estimates) were broadly similar to those from industrialised economies.

Current balance of evidence

Given the above strengths and limitations, we assess the balance of evidence as follows:

1. For *preterm delivery* findings across a considerable evidence base were generally consistent and effectively rule out large effect sizes (RR≥2.0). Well-powered, better studies were less positive than smaller, lower quality studies. Pooled estimates of risk where available pointed at most to only modest effects—for example, excess risks of 2% to 18% with analysis restricted to higher quality reports.
2. For *SGA* the position is similar. Moreover, most meta-estimates, including those from higher quality and larger studies, were close to the null value. Studies on LBW provided somewhat higher effect estimates, but these were fewer in number and lower in quality. Findings on birth weight, similarly, were reported in relatively few studies of limited quality and were mixed in their findings, but again pointing to a limited impact on fetal growth.
3. For *pre-eclampsia and gestational hypertension* the evidence base has barely grown since 2005 and remains too limited to draw firm conclusions. Nonetheless, most estimates pointed to small or null effects.

Although there have been many narrative reviews on work and pregnancy outcomes, few have been systematic and produced meta-estimates of risk. In comparison, however, our earlier analysis[11] estimated somewhat higher RRs for preterm delivery in relation to working hours, shift work and standing, with pooled RRs of 1.31, 1.28 and 1.20 overall, and 1.20, 1.26 and 1.26, respectively in the subsets of studies of higher methodological quality. Similarly, for preterm delivery, Mozurkewich *et al*[99] estimated an RR of 1.26 for prolonged standing and 1.24 for shift and night work.

Implications

Findings to date seem broadly reassuring. Small levels of excess risk may exist, but it is also possible (especially given the smaller estimates from bigger and better studies, and their shrinkage over time, as more data have accumulated), that much or all of these effects are explained by a combination of chance, bias and imperfectly controlled confounding. However, a degree of residual uncertainty will always surround estimation of risks at lower levels and information on risks at extremes of exposure is very limited.

The balance of evidence is against a strong effect of the reviewed activities on the reviewed pregnancy outcomes. At the same time, for none of the exposures examined was there any indication of important beneficial effects. Moreover, given the clinical importance, say, of preterm delivery, a RR of 1.18 (the meta-estimate in better quality studies for working >40 h/week) might equate to 1.2 additional cases (95% CI 0.3 to 2.2) per 100 deliveries to women with that exposure, assuming a background prevalence of singleton live preterm delivery of 6.7%[100] and, if truly present, would be important to avoid. Given residual uncertainties in the evidence base and the apparent absence of benefits, there may be a precautionary case for advising women against long working hours (eg, >40 h/week), prolonged standing (eg, >4 h/day), and heavy physical work, particularly late in pregnancy, at a time in any case when fatigue limits the capacity for high demand duties. This case is not strongly driven by evidence of harm, however, and care should

be taken to avoid causing undue anxiety among patients and their employers.

The need for further research is most evident for pre-eclampsia and hypertension, where studies are few, but somewhat less pressing for preterm delivery and SGA since the database has grown substantially larger over the past few years. A relatively neglected area, deserving of more attention however, concerns the impact of work activities on intrauterine growth trajectory and birth anthropometrics,[72] given the growing evidence that poorer health in adulthood is predicted by SGA and birth weight and other markers like small head circumference, reduced abdominal girth, thinness at birth, shortness at birth and LBW relative to placental weight.[101]

Acknowledgements We thank Sian Williams, Penny Peel, Emily Young and the members of the HWDU Pregnancy Guidelines Development Group for their support and advice and Sue Curtis for helping to prepare this manuscript.

Contributors KTP and MB formulated the study questions, designed the review and searches, in part undertook the quality assessment of papers, analysed the data and prepared the first draft of this review. ECH and CL conducted the searches (which ECH helped to design), shared in the critical assessment of papers, and contributed to the writing and interpretation of this review. JPB critically appraised the review's methods and content and contributed to the writing of the final paper, including the interpretation of findings.

Funding This work was commissioned by the Health and Work Development Unit of the Royal College of Physicians, London.

Competing interests None.

Ethics approval This paper was a review of literature available in the public domain.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.

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Table S1: Features of the studies included in the review

First author (year) (ref)	Location	Study period	Study design	Exposure(s)	Method of exposure assessment	Outcome(s)
General population studies						
Abeysena C (2009),[66] (2010),[67] (2010)[68]	Sri Lanka	2001-2002	Prospective cohort	Shift work Standing	Interviewer-administered questionnaire at ≤16, 28 and 36 weeks gestation	Pre term delivery (<37 wks) SGA (<10th percentile and <5th percentile) LBW (<2500g)
Ahlborg GJ (1990)[13]	Orebro, Sweden	1980-1983	Cross-sectional	Lifting	Self-administered questionnaire after delivery; exposure validated by hygienist in a subgroup	Pre term delivery (<37 wks) LBW (<2500g) LBW adjusted for gestational age
Al-Dabbagh SA (2006)[69]	Mosul, Iraq	2003-2004	Case-control hospital based	Physical activity	Face to face interview shortly after delivery	Pre term delivery (<37 wks)
Arafa MA (2007)[70]	Alexandria, Egypt	2004-2005	Cross-sectional	Shift work Standing	Face to face interview shortly after delivery	Pre term delivery (<37 wks) SGA (<10th percentile)
Bell JF (2008)[71]	US	1979-2000	Cohort, record linkage	Working hours Physical activity	Periodic national longitudinal survey; job exposure matrix based on occupational title	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (≤10th percentile)
Berkowitz GS (1983)[15]	New Haven, USA	1977-1978	Case-control hospital based	Working hours Standing Lifting	Expert interview after delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	UK	1993-2003	Prospective cohort	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting	Nurse administered questionnaire at 11 weeks and 34 weeks gestation	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (<10th percentile)
Both MI (2010)[73]	UK	1991-1992	Prospective cohort	Shift work	Mail questionnaires distributed in both the first and second trimester	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) Birthweight (continuous)
Brink-Henriksen T (1995),[17] (1995)[18]	Denmark	1989-1991	Prospective cohort	Working hours Standing Lifting	Self administered questionnaire during pregnancy	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) Birthweight (continuous)
Burdorf A (2011)[89]	Rotterdam, Netherlands	2002-2006	Prospective cohort	Lifting	Mail questionnaire (almost all completed during pregnancy)	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) LBW (<3000g)
Ceron-Mireles P (1996)[19]	Mexico city, Mexico	1992	Cross-sectional	Working hours Standing Physical activity	Personal interview, soon after delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (≤10th percentile)
Chang P-J (2010)[74]	Taiwan	2005-2006	Cross-sectional	Working hours Shift work	Home interview, 6 months after delivery	Gestational hypertension & pre-eclampsia

First author (year) (ref)	Location	Study period	Study design	Exposure(s)	Method of exposure assessment	Outcome(s)
Croteau A (2006),[75] (2007)[76]	Quebec, Canada	1997-1999	Case-control hospital-based	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting	Telephone interview after delivery (median 30 days)	SGA (≤10th percentile) Preterm delivery (<37 wks) Very preterm delivery (<34 wks) was also analysed – see text.
Di Renzo GC (2011)[90]	Italy	2008	Cross-sectional	Physical activity	Medical record of employment (not stated, but probably antenatal)	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Fortier I (1995)[21]	Quebec, Canada	1989	Cross-sectional	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting Physical activity	Telephone interview after delivery (median 6 wks)	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (<10th percentile)
Gisselmann MD (2008)[77]	Sweden	1980-1985	Prospective cohort, record linkage	Physical activity	Job-exposure matrix based on job title at national census in 1980 (linked to a national birth registry for the later period)	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) Very pre-term delivery (<32 wks) LBW (<2500g) Very LBW (<1500g) SGA (<10th percentile)
Gollenberg AL (2011)[91]	USA	2000-2003	Prospective cohort	Physical activity	Interviewer administered questionnaires, one before 24 wks (mean 15 wks) gestation and one later in pregnancy (mean 28 wks)	SGA (<10th percentile)
Haelterman E (2007)[78]	Quebec, Canada	1997-1999	Case-control	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting	Telephone interview after delivery (median 31 days)	Gestational hypertension & pre-eclampsia
Hanke W (1999)[22]	Lodz, Poland	1996-1997	Cross-sectional	Shift work Standing Physical activity	Interview few days after delivery	SGA (<10th percentile)
Hartikainen-Sorri AL(1989)[23]	Finland	1982	Case-control, hospital based	Shift work Standing Physical activity	Mail questionnaire within 1 year of delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Hatch M (1997)[24]	USA	1987-1989	Prospective cohort	Working hours Standing Lifting Physical activity	Telephone interview, mail questionnaire	LBW (≤3000g). Birthweight (continuous)
Hickey CA (1995)[25]	USA	1985-1988	Prospective cohort	Working hours Standing Physical activity	Self administered questionnaire during pregnancy	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Homer CJ (1990)[26]	USA	1979 - 1983	Cross-sectional	Physical activity	Derived from job title, using a validated physical effort scale	Preterm- delivery (<37 wks) LBW (<2500g) Birthweight (continuous)

First author (year) (ref)	Location	Study period	Study design	Exposure(s)	Method of exposure assessment	Outcome(s)
Jansen PW (2010)[79]	Rotterdam, Netherlands	2002-2006	Prospective cohort, population-based	Working hours	Mail questionnaire in later pregnancy (≥25 wks gestation)	Preterm- delivery (<37 wks) SGA (<10th percentile) Birthweight (continuous) Gestational hypertension & preeclampsia
Klebanoff MA (1990)[29]	USA	1984-1987	Prospective cohort	Standing Physical activity	Face to face interview	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) Birthweight (continuous)
Landsbergis PA (1996)[30]	USA	1987-1989	Prospective cohort	Working hours Physical activity	Telephone interview and mail update	Gestational hypertension & preeclampsia
Launer LJ (1990)[31]	Guatemala	1984-1986	Prospective cohort	Standing Physical activity	Face to face interview	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (≤10th percentile)
Magann EF (1996)[34]	Australia	1989-1991	Prospective cohort	Physical activity	Self administered questionnaire	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) Birthweight (continuous) SGA (<3rd & <10th percentile)
Magann EF (2005)[33]	San Diego, USA	Not specified	Prospective cohort	Standing Lifting	Face to face interview	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (undefined)
Mamelle N (1984)[35]	France	1977-1978	Cross-sectional	Working hours Shift work Standing Physical activity	Face to face interview	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Mamelle N (1987)[96]	Lyon, France	1984	Case control, hospital based	Physical activity	Face to face interview after delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Marcoux S (1999)[36]	Quebec, Canada	1984-6	Case control, hospital based	Working hours	Face to face interview a few days after delivery	Gestational hypertension
McDonald AD (1988)[37] Armstrong BG (1989)[38]	Montreal, Canada	1982-1984	Cross-sectional	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting Physical activity	Interview after delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) LBW (≤2500g) % Predicted birthweight (by *job title*)*
Meyer BA (1985)[39]	USA	1981	Case control, population based	Standing	Based on job title according to an expert validated database	LBW (<2500g)
Meyer JD (2007)[82]	USA	2000	Cross-sectional	Physical activity	Based on job title according to expert job-exposure matrices of two kinds	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) LBW (<2500g)
Misra DP (1998)[40]	USA	1988-1989	Prospective cohort	Shift work Standing Lifting	Face to face interview or telephone interview	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Nelson K (2009)[83]	Bangkok, Thailand	2006-2007	Case control, hospital based	Physical activity	Face to face interview after delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) Preterm rupture of membranes (<37 wks) Very preterm delivery (<32 wks)

First author (year) (ref)	Location	Study period	Study design	Exposure(s)	Method of exposure assessment	Outcome(s)
Newman RB (2001)[41]	USA	Not specified	Prospective cohort	Standing Physical activity	Face to face interview	Preterm rupture of membranes (<37 wks)
Nguyen N (2004)[97]	Hanoi, Vietnam	2002	Prospective cohort	Working hours Physical activity	Face to face interview	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	Ireland	2001	Prospective cohort	Working hours Shift work Physical activity	Self-completed questionnaire at 14-16 w ks	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (<10th percentile) LBW (≤2500g)
Nurminen T (1989)[42] (1989)[43]	Finland	1976-1982	Cross sectional	Shift work Standing Physical activity	Face to face expert interview 2-4 months after delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (≤ 10th percentile) Gestational hypertension
Omokhodion FO (2010)[85]	Ibadan, Nigeria	2008	Cross-sectional	Standing Physical activity	Personal interview, usually within 48 hrs of delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) LBW (<2500g)
Peoples-Sheps MD (1991)[44]	USA	1980	Cross-sectional	Working hours Physical activity	Derived by job title and mail interview	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) LBW (<2500g)
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	North Carolina USA	1995-2000	Prospective cohort	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting	Telephone or face to face interview	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (<10th percentile)
Rabkin CS (1990)[46]	London, England	1982-1984	Prospective cohort	Working hours Physical activity	Face to face expert interview	Birthweight (continuous)
Rao S (2003)[48]	Pune region, India	1994-1996	Prospective cohort	Physical activity	Interview before delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) Birthweight (continuous)
Ritsmitchai S (1997)[98]	Songkhla, Thailand	1993	Case control, hospital based	Standing Lifting	Face to face interview, after delivery	Preterm delivery (≤37 wks)
Rodrigues T (2008)[86]	Portugal	Not stated	Case control, hospital based	Working hours Standing Physical activity	Interview within 96 hours of delivery	Preterm delivery (≤37 wks)
Saftlas AF (2004)[49]	Connecticut, USA	1988-1991	Prospective cohort	Standing	Face to face expert interview	Gestational hypertension & preeclampsia
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	France	1981	Cross-sectional	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting Physical activity	Face to face expert interview, after delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) LBW (<2500g)
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1991)[52]	France	1987-1988	Cross-sectional	Working hours Standing Lifting Physical activity	Face to face expert interview, after delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)

First author (year) (ref)	Location	Study period	Study design	Exposure(s)	Method of exposure assessment	Outcome(s)
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (2004)[53]	16 European countries	1994-1997	Case-control hospital based	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting	Interview after delivery	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Savitz DA (1996)[54]	USA	1988	Cross-sectional	Working hours	Mail or telephone questionnaire	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) VLBW (<1500g) MLBW (1500-2499g) SGA (<10th percentile)
Schramm WF (1996)[55]	Missouri, USA	1989-1991	Case-control, population based	Standing Lifting	In-hospital interview or mail questionnaire	VLBW (<1500g) MLBW (1500-2499g)
Spinillo A (1995)[56]	Pavia, Italy	1990-1994	Case-control, hospital based	Working hours Standing Physical activity	Face to face expert interview	SGA (<10th percentile birthweight plus abdominal circumference <10th percentile) Pre-eclampsia
Tafari N (1980)[58]	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	1976-1977	Cross-sectional	Physical activity	Face to face interview	Birthweight (continuous)
Teitelman AM (1990)[59]	New Haven, USA	1980-1982	Prospective cohort	Standing	Based on job title	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) Gestational age (in wks) LBW (<2500g) Birthweight (continuous)
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	S Thailand	1994-1995	Prospective cohort	Working hours Standing Lifting Physical activity	Face to face expert interview at 17 & 32 wks	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) LBW (≤2500g) SGA (<10th percentile)
Vrijkotte TGM (2009)[88]	Amsterdam, Netherlands	2003-2004	Prospective cohort	Working hours Standing Physical activity	Mail questionnaire at about 15 wks gestation	SGA (<10th percentile) Birthweight (continuous)
Wergeland E (1997),[61] (1998)[62]	Norway	1989	Cross-sectional	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting	Self-administered questionnaire after delivery	LBW (<2500g) Birthweight (continuous) Pre-eclampsia
Zhu JL (2004)[64]	Denmark	2004	Prospective cohort	Shift work	Telephone interview during pregnancy	Preterm delivery (<37 wks). LBW (<2500g) SGA (<10th percentile)
Zuckerman BS (1986)[65]	Boston, USA	1977-1979	Cross-sectional	Standing	Face to face interview, after delivery	Gestational age (in wks) Birthweight (continuous)
Studies in selected occupations						
Axelsson G (1989)[14]	Sweden	1980-1984	Cross-sectional	Shift work	Mail questionnaire *in hospital employees*	Birthweight (continuous)

First author (year) (ref)	Location	Study period	Study design	Exposure(s)	Method of exposure assessment	Outcome(s)
Bodin L (1999)[16]	Sweden	1980-1987	Cross-sectional	Working hours Shift work	Mail questionnaire *in midwives*	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) LBW (<2500g) SGA (<10th percentile) Birthweight (continuous)
Florack EIM (1995)[20]	Netherlands	1987-1989	Prospective cohort	Lifting Physical activity	Personal interview, before pregnancy *in hospital workers*	Gestational age (in wks vs expected term)* Birthweight (continuous)
Ha E (2002)[94]	Beijing, China	1996-1998	Cross-sectional	Standing	Face to face interview (timing unclear) in *petrochemical workers*	Birthweight (continuous)
Herdt-Losavio ML (2011)[92]	New York State, USA	1997-2003	Nested case-control	Working hours	Mail questionnaire in *licensed cosmetologists*	LBW (<2500g)
Irwin DE (1994)[27]	USA	1987-1989	Cross-sectional	Standing Lifting Physical activity	Based on job title using military data of activity *in Navy personnel*	Gestational hypertension & pre-eclampsia
Jurewicz J (2005)[80]	Poland	2001-2003	Cross-sectional	Physical activity	Based on main job held and estimates of energy expenditure in an observed sample of *glasshouse workers*	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Klebanoff MA (1990)[28]	USA	1985	Cross-sectional	Working hours	Mail questionnaire after delivery, (non-respondents contacted by telephone) *in medical graduates*	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) SGA (<10th percentile) Birthweight (continuous)
Lawson CC (2009)[81]	US	1992-2001	Cross-sectional	Working hours Shift work Standing Lifting	Mail questionnaire in *nurses* participating in the national *Nurses'* Health Study II	Pre-term delivery (<37 wks) Very preterm delivery (<34 wks) was also analysed.
Lima M (1999)[95]	Palmares, Brazil	1992	Cross-sectional	Working hours	Face to face expert interview, after delivery in low income low literacy *agricultural workers*	Birthweight (continuous)
Lin YC (2011)[93]	Taiwan	1997-2007	Cross-sectional	Shift work	Self-administered questionnaire in *semiconductor workers*	Birthweight (continuous)
Luke B (1995)[32]	USA	from 1980	Case control, population based	Working hours Shift work Standing Physical activity	Mail questionnaire *in nurses*	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Ramirez G (1990)[47]	USA	1981-1984	Cross-sectional	Physical activity	*Military* records	Preterm delivery (≤37 wks).
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1985)[50]	France	1979-1981	Cross-sectional	Physical activity	Face to face expert interview, after delivery in *hospital personnel*	Preterm delivery (<36.5 wks) LBW (<2500g) Gestational hypertension
Shirangi A (2009)[87]	Australia	1960-2000	Cross-sectional	Working hours	National mail questionnaire in *veterinarians*	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)

First author (year) (ref)	Location	Study period	Study design	Exposure(s)	Method of exposure assessment	Outcome(s)
Stinson JC (2003)[57]	USA	Not specified	Prospective cohort	Shift work Physical activity	Self administered questionnaire during pregnancy *in military personnel*	Preterm delivery (<37 wks)
Xu X (1994)[63]	Anhui, China	1992	Prospective cohort	Shift work	Face-to-face interview *in textile workers*	Preterm delivery (<37 wks) LBW (<2500g) Birth weight (continuous)

LBW =low birthweight; MLBW = moderately low birthweight; VLBW = very low birthweight; SGA = small for gestational age

* These non-comparable outcomes were not considered further in the review

Table S2: Weekly working hours, shift work, standing and risk of pre-term delivery

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)	Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting	Pooled in meta-analysis
			Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding		
WEEKLY WORKING HOURS								
Cohort studies								
Bell JF (2008)[71]	3389	1.12 (0.84 - 1.49)	≥40 vs <40 h/w	Not stated	No	Yes	No	Yes
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1318	1.03 (0.49 - 2.15)	≥40 vs <40 h/wk	11 weeks	No	No	No	Yes§
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1287	1.01 (0.47 - 2.17)	≥40 vs <40 h/wk	19 weeks	No	No	No	No
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	797	0.59 (0.17 - 2.03)	≥40 vs <40 h/wk	34 weeks	No	No	No	Yes¶
Brink-Henriksen T (1995)[18]	927	1.87 (0.78 - 4.16)	≥45 vs <30 h/wk	16 weeks	No	No	No	Yes†§
Hickey CA (1995)[25]	183	0.68 (0.12 - 2.7)	>40 vs 1-20 h/wk	24 - 26 weeks	No	No	Yes	Yes†
Jansen PW (2010)[79]	4408	1.30 (0.81 - 2.10)	≥40 vs 1-24 h/wk	≥25 weeks	No	No	No	Yes†§
Nguyen N (2004)[97]	1709	1.6 (0.9 - 2.8)	>40 vs ≤40 h/wk	Not stated	No	Yes?	No	Yes
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	481	2.25 (0.69 - 7.32)	≥40 vs 40 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes§
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1037	0.6 (0.4 - 0.9)	>46 vs 35-45 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1037	0.4 (0.2 - 0.8)	>46 vs 35-45 h/wk	Trimester 2	No	No	No	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1037	0.3 (0.1 - 0.7)	>46 vs 35-45 h/wk	Trimester 3	No	No	No	No
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	886	1.6 (0.8 - 3.3)	≥61 vs ≤50 h/wk	15 - 28 weeks	No	No	No	No
Case-control studies								
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	1.2 (1.0 - 1.6)	>40 vs 20-34 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes§
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	1.2 (0.7 – 2.0)	>40 vs 20-34 h/wk	Trimester 1 & 2 but not 3	No	No	No	Yes¶
Luke B (1995)[32]	1470	1.6 (1.1 - 2.2)	>36 vs ≤36 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No	No
Rodrigues T (2008)[86]	1328	1.16 (0.88 - 1.54)	≥40 vs <40 h/w	Any	No	Yes	No	Yes
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (2004)[53]	2062	1.33 (1.1 - 1.6)	≥43 vs 30-39 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	Yes	Yes
Cross-sectional studies								
Bodin L (1999)[16]	1685	1.3 (0.6 - 2.7)	≥36 vs 21-35 h/wk	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No	No
Ceron-Mireles P (1996)[19]	2429	1.21 (0.9 - 1.62)	>50 vs 3-25 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes§
Fortier I (1995)[21]	1833	1.14 (0.71 - 1.82)	≥40 vs <30 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes§
Klebanoff MA (1990)[28]	989	1.2 (0.8 - 1.7)	Residents (>100 h) vs others	Any	No	No	No	No
Lawson CC (2009)[81]	6750	1.0 (0.8 - 1.4)	≥41 vs 21-40 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes§
Mamelle N (1984)[35]	1928	1.7 (1.1 - 2.5)	>41 vs ≤40 h/wk	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting	Pooled in meta-analysis
				Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding		
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	22761	1.34	P<0.05	≥46 vs <46 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No	No*
Peoples-Sheps MD (1991)[44]	1853	1.1	(0.7 - 1.8)	≥40 vs 1-20 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes§
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	2245	0.59	(0.21 - 1.37)	≥42 vs <42 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	Yes	Yes	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1991)[52]	873	1.0	(0.4 - 2.5)	>45 vs ≤45 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	Yes	No
Savitz DA (1996)[54]	1015	1.1	(0.8 - 1.5)	≥40 vs no paid work	5 months	No	No	No	Yes†§
Shirangi A (2009)[87]	744	3.69	(1.40 - 9.72)	>45 vs <35 h/wk	Any	No	No	No	Yes§
SHIFT WORK									
Cohort studies									
Abeysena C (2010)[68]	737	2.20	(1.22 - 3.95)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards vs not	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No	No
Abeysena C (2010)[68]	631	1.28	(0.48 - 3.39)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards vs not	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No	No
Abeysena C (2010)[68]	582	1.05	(0.31 - 3.58)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards vs not	Trimester 3	No	Yes	No	No
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1318	1.14	(0.43 - 2.93)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	11 weeks	No	No	No	Yes§
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1287	1.07	(0.37 - 3.05)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	19 weeks	No	No	No	Yes¶
Both MI (2010)[73]	~11720	1.14	(0.65 - 2.01)	Shifts vs none	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes§
Both MI (2010)[73]	~11720	0.73	(0.30 - 1.78)	Shifts vs none	Trimester 3	No	No	No	No
Both MI (2010)[73]	~11720	1.80	(0.77 - 4.20)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	No	No	No
Both MI (2010)[73]	11123	0.67	(0.47 - 0.95)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	Trimester 3	No	No	No	Yes¶
Misra DP (1998)[40]	1166	1.0	(0.59 - 1.69)	Shifts vs none	Trimesters 1 & 2	No	No	No	Yes†§
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	481	1.68	(0.44 - 6.34)	Shifts vs none	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes§
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1796	1.5	(1.0 - 2.1)	Regular night work (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes§
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1796	1.6	(1.0 - 2.8)	Regular night work (yes vs no)	Trimester 2	No	No	No	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1796	1.8	(0.8 - 3.4)	Regular night work (yes vs no)	Trimester 3	No	No	No	Yes¶
Stinson JC (2003)[57]	359	1.8	(0.93 - 3.53)	Night vs day	22 - 26 weeks	No	No	No	Yes†§
Xu X (1994)[63]	887	2.0	(1.1 - 3.4)	Rotating shift work (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes§
Zhu JL (2004)[64]	35662	0.97	(0.8 - 1.17)	Rotating shift work vs daytime work	Trimesters 1 & 2	No	No	No	Yes†§
Case-control studies									
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	0.9	(0.7 - 1.2)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes§

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting	Pooled in meta-analysis
				Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding		
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	1.0	(0.6 – 1.7)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	Trimester 1 & 2 but not 3	No	No	No	Yes[¶]
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	1.0	(0.9 - 1.3)	Shift work vs regular schedule	Trimester 1	No	No	No	No
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	0.8	(0.5 – 1.7)	Shift work vs regular schedule	Trimester 1 & 2 but not 3	No	No	No	No
Hartikainen-Sorri AL (1989)[23]	358	0.86	(0.51 - 1.45)	Shift work (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Luke B (1995)[32]	1470	1.5	(1.1 - 2.1)	Evening/night vs day	Not stated	Yes	No	No	Yes
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (2004)[53]	6309	0.97	(0.8 - 1.1)	Shift work (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	No	Yes	Yes
Cross-sectional studies									
Arafa MA (2007)[70]	730	1.13	(0.65 - 1.89)	Shifts vs mornings only	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bodin L (1999)[16]	1685	5.6	(1.9 - 16.4)	Night vs day	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No	Yes[†]
Fortier I (1995)[21]	4118	1.03	(0.72 - 1.48)	Shift work vs day only	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Lawson CC (2009)[81]	6750	1.1	(0.8 - 1.5)	Night vs day only	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Lawson CC (2009)[81]	6750	0.7	(0.5 - 1.1)	Rotating shifts vs day only	Trimester 1	No	No	No	No
Mamelle N (1984)[35]	1928	1.6	(1.0 - 2.5)	Shift and night work vs none	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	22761	1.18	P>0.05	Changing shift vs not	Not stated	No	No	No	No*
Nurminen T (1989)[42]	unclear	0.9	(0.7 - 1.1)	Shift work (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	2261	0.8	(0.16 - 2.51)	Night vs day	Trimester 1	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
STANDING									
Cohort studies									
Abeysena C (2010)[68]	690	1.34	(0.71 - 1.81)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <4 h/d	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No	Yes
Abeysena C (2010)[68]	631	0.80	(0.47 - 3.5)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <4 h/d	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No	No
Abeysena C (2010)[68]	582	0.80	(0.47 - 1.46)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <4 h/d	Trimester 3	No	Yes	No	Yes[¶]
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1318	0.92	(0.49 - 1.70)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <4 h/d	11 weeks	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1287	0.76	(0.39 - 1.49)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <4 h/d	19 weeks	No	No	No	No
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	797	0.99	(0.39 - 2.51)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <4 h/d	34 weeks	No	No	No	Yes[¶]
Brink Henriksen T (1995)[18]	4259	1.2	(0.6 - 2.4)	>5 vs 0-2 h/d	16 weeks	No	No	No	Yes[†§]
Hickey CA (1995)[25]	612	1.11	(0.61 - 2.11)	>3 vs ≤3 h/d	24 - 26 weeks	No	No	Yes	No
Klebanoff MA (1990)[29]	7101	1.31	(1.01 - 1.71)	≥8 vs 0 h/d	1 - 5 months	No	No	No	Yes[†§]
Launer LJ (1990)[31]	4168	1.56	(1.04 - 2.6)	Standing vs sitting	Not stated	No	No	No	No
Magann EF (2005)[33]	485	1.64	(0.88 - 3.06)	≥4 vs <4 h/d	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Misra DP (1998)[40]	1166	1.05	(0.63 - 1.71)	≥3 vs <3 h/d	Trimesters 1 & 2	No	Yes	No	No

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting	Pooled in meta-analysis
				Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding		
Newman RB (2001)[41]	1218	1.69	(1.2 - 2.38)	>3 vs ≤3 h/d	22 - 24 weeks	No	No	No	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	977	1.2	(0.9 - 1.7)	>30 vs 6-15 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	Yes	Yes
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	977	0.9	(0.6 - 1.2)	>30 vs 6-15 h/wk	Trimester 2	No	No	Yes	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	977	1.3	(0.8 – 2.3)	>30 vs 6-15 h/wk	Trimester 3	No	No	Yes	Yes[¶]
Teitelman AM (1990)[59]	708	2.72	(1.24 - 5.95)	Standing still >3 h/d vs continuous active motion	Trimester 1 (mostly)	No	No	No	No
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	1121	0.9	(0.3 - 2.3)	≥5 vs ≤4 h/d	15 - 28 weeks	No	No	No	Yes[†§]
Case-control studies									
Berkowitz GS (1983)[15]	186	1.36	(0.73 - 2.55)	Most/all of the time vs none/little of the time	Not stated	No	Yes	No	No
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	1.1	(0.9 - 1.3)	≥7 vs <2 h/d	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	1.0	(0.7 - 1.5)	≥7 vs <2 h/d	Trimester 1 & 2 but not 3	No	No	No	Yes[¶]
Hartikainen-Sorri AL (1989)[23]	358	1.16	(0.71 - 1.9)	Standing-moving vs not	Not stated	No	Yes	No	No
Luke B (1995)[32]	1470	2.42	(1.37 - 4.62)	>4 vs <4 h/d	Not stated	Yes	No	No	Yes
Ritsmitchai S (1997)[98]	446	0.58	(0.12 – 2.75)	>3 vs <3 h/d	Trimester 1 & 2, but not 3	No	Yes	No	No
Ritsmitchai S (1997)[98]	446	4.10	(1.29- 13.1)	>3 vs <3 h/d	All trimesters	No	Yes	No	No
Rodrigues T (2008)[86]	1328	0.92	(0.66 - 1.30)	Standing vs sitting at work	Any	No	Yes	No	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (2004)[53]	4810	1.26	(1.1 - 1.5)	>6 vs <2 h/d	Trimester 1	No	No	Yes	Yes
Cross-sectional studies									
Arafa MA (2007)[70]	599	1.03	(0.86 - 1.59)	Standing vs sitting at work	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes	No
Ceron-Mireles P (1996)[19]	2429	1.16	(0.89 - 1.51)	>7 vs ≤7 h/d	Not stated	No	No	No	No
Fortier I (1995)[21]	3502	0.88	(0.59 - 1.33)	≥6 vs <3 h/d	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Lawson CC (2009)[81]	6750	1.3	(1.0 - 1.7)	Standing/walking ≥9 vs 0-4 h/d	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No	Yes
Mamelle N (1984)[35]	1928	1.6	(1.0 - 1.9)	≥3 vs <3 h/d	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes	No
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	22761	1.07	P>0.05	Standing ≥8 vs <8 h/d	Not stated	No	No	No*	No
Omokhodion FO (2010)[85]	997	1.10	(0.42 – 2.85)	<6 vs ≤6 h/d	Not stated	No	No	No	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	2269	1.29	(0.85 - 1.94)	Standing (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	Yes	Yes	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1991)[52]	874	1.59	(0.82 - 3.19)	Standing (often/always vs none/sometimes)	Not stated	No	No	Yes	No

h/wk = hours per week; h/d= hours per day
§ contributed both to the overall meta-analysis and to sensitivity analysis

† contributed both to the overall meta-analysis and to meta-analysis of late pregnancy risk
¶ contributed only to meta-analysis of late pregnancy risk
* not pooled as a standard error could not be derived from the published data
Note that the term RR (relative risk) is used generically to encompass a variety of published effect measures (odds ratios, incidence density ratios, hazard ratios etc)

Table S3: Lifting, physical activity and risk of pre-term delivery

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
				Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding	
LIFTING								
Cohort studies								
Ahlborg GJ (1990)[13]	3389	1.29	(0.69 - 2.4)	≥12 kg >50 x/wk vs none	Not stated	No	No	No
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1318	0.69	(0.21 - 2.26)	Lifting ≥25 kg by hand	11 weeks	No	No	No
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1287	1.10	(0.33 - 3.63)	Lifting ≥25 kg by hand	19 weeks	No	No	No
Brink Henriksen T (1995)[18]	3410	0.93	(0.45 - 1.75)	Lifting ≥12 kg ≥10 x/d vs never	16 weeks	No	No	No
Burdorf A (2011)[89]	6302	0.55	(0.32 - 0.95)	>5 kg by hand, often/always vs seldom/never	Not specified	No	No	No
Magann EF (2005)[33]	318	1.14	(0.32 - 3.18)	Lifting ≥11kg >6x/hour	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Misra DP (1998)[40]	1166	1.49	(0.61 - 3.28)	Lifting heavy objects on the job (yes vs no)	Trimesters 1 & 2	No	No	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1176	1.3	(0.9 - 1.8)	Lifting ≥25 lbs ≥13 vs 0 x/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1176	1.3	((0.8 - 2.1)	Lifting ≥25 lbs ≥13 vs 0 x/wk	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1176	1.3	(0.6 - 2.9)	Lifting ≥25 lbs ≥13 vs 0 x/wk	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	1108	0.9	(0.4 - 2.1)	>12 kg, 1-10 x/d vs none	15 - 28 weeks	No	No	No
Case-control studies								
Berkowitz GS (1983)[15]	231	0.81	(0.43 - 1.49)	Lifting on the job	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	0.9	(0.8 - 1.1)	≥7 vs 0 kg	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Croteau A (2007)[76]	5732	1.0	(0.7 - 1.4)	≥7 vs 0 kg	Trimester 1 & 2 but not 3	No	No	No
Ritsmitchai S (1997)[98]	446	0.86	(0.39 - 1.89)	>10 kg 3x/d in routine work	Trimester 1 & 2, but not 3	No	Yes	No
Ritsmitchai S (1997)[98]	446	2.91	(1.29 - 6.58)	>10 kg 3x/d in routine work	All trimesters	No	Yes	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (2004)[53]	4786	1.02	(0.8 - 1.2)	Loads carried >20 kg vs none	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Cross-sectional studies								
Fortier I (1995)[21]	3078	0.87	(0.52 - 1.45)	≥10 kg vs none	Not stated	No	No	No
Lawson CC (2009)[81]	6750	1.2	(0.8 - 2.0)	≥16 vs <1 x/d	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	22761	1.25	P<0.01	Lifting heavy weights ≥15 vs <15 x/d	Not stated	No	No	No

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
				Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding	
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	2262	1.35	(0.77 - 2.24)	Carrying of heavy loads (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1991)[52]	874	1.31	(0.64 - 2.58)	Lifting heavy loads (often/always vs none/sometimes)	Not stated	No	No	No
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY								
Cohort studies								
Bell JF (2008)[71]	3389	1.16	(1.03 - 1.30)	Work attribute index - time running/walking/climbing/standing	Not stated	No	No	No
Gisselmann MD (2008)[77]	356887	1.10*	P<0.001	High physical demands vs low	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Hickey CA (1995)[25]	612	0.7	(0.41 - 1.18)	Occupational fatigue score (≥3 vs <3)	24 - 26 weeks	No	No	No
Klebanoff MA (1990)[29]	7100	1.04	(0.76 - 1.42)	Heavy work ≥4 vs 0 h/d	1 - 5 months	No	No	No
Launer LJ (1990)[31]	4168	1.11	(0.77 - 1.62)	Manual vs office work	Not stated	No	No	No
Magann EF (1996)[34]	531	1.26	(0.64 - 2.6)	>2900 vs <2300 kcal/d energy expenditure	16 - 18 weeks	No	Yes	No
Newman RB (2001)[41]	1218	1.17	(1.01 - 1.35)	Physical activity score	22 - 24 weeks	No	No	No
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	481	1.20	(0.25 -1.86)	Job very physically active vs less	Not stated	No	No	No
Nguyen N (2004)[97]	1709	2.4	(1.8 - 3.3)	Physically demanding work (yes vs, no)	Not stated	No	Yes?	No
Rao S (2003)[48]	508	0.8	(0.4 - 1.6)	High vs low activity	18 weeks	No	No	No
Rao S (2003)[48]	485	1.2	(0.6 - 2.3)	High vs low activity	28 weeks	No	No	No
Stinson JC (2003)[57]	359	1.79	(0.93 - 3.44)	Fatigue score >660 ('severe' vs ≤660) high vs low	22 - 26 weeks	No	No	No
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	346	1.2	(0.4 - 3.8)	High vs low	15 - 28 weeks	No	No	No
Case-control studies								
Al-Dabbagh SA (2006)[69]	400	1.70	(1.02 - 2.84)	Heavy manual work (yes vs no)	Not stated	Yes	Yes?	Yes
Hartikainen-Sorri AL (1989)[23]	358	0.81	(0.46 - 1.43)	Heavy physical loading (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Jurewicz J (2005)[80]	386	1.7	(0.6 - 5.0)	>1000 vs ≤1000 kcal/shift	Not stated	Yes	Yes	No
Luke B (1995)[32]	1470	1.4	(1.1 - 1.9)	Occupational fatigue score (≥3 vs <3)	Not stated	Yes	No	Yes
Mamelle N (1987)[96]	600	1.1	(0.78 - 1.54)	High vs low exertion	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)	Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
			Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding	
Nelson K (2009)[83]	697	2.07¶ (0.81 - 5.28)	Heavy vs light exertion	Not stated	No	No	No
Rodrigues T (2008)[86]	1328	0.72 (0.29 - 1.81)	High physically demanding job (yes vs no)	Any	No	Yes	No
Cross-sectional studies							
Ceron-Mireles P (1996)[19]	2429	1.25 (0.97 - 1.6)	Job requires physical effort (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No
Di Renzo GC (2011)[90]	7634	1.95 (1.18 - 3.21)	Physical work (vs intellectual)	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes
Fortier I (1995)[21]	1829	0.87 (0.49 - 1.54)	'Important' vs none	Not stated	No	No	No
Homer CJ (1990)[26]	773	2.0 (1.1 - 3.9)	High vs low exertion job	Not stated	No	No	No
Mamelle N (1984)[35]	1928	1.7 (1.1 - 2.0)	High vs low exertion	Not stated	No	Yes	No
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	22761	1.10 P>0.05	Great physical effort (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No
Meyer (2007)[82]	26408	1.04 (0.93 - 1.15)	Highest physical demands (JCQ)	Not stated	No	No	No
Meyer (2007)[82]	26408	1.09 (0.98 - 1.22)	Highest physical demands (O*NET)	Not stated	No	No	No
Nurminen T (1989)[43]	675	1.4 (1.1 - 1.7)	Work with a moderate physical load vs sedentary	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Omokhodion FO (2010)[85]	974	1.52 (0.97 - 2.39)	Physical exertion (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No
Peoples-Sheps MD (1991)[44]	535	1.1 (0.6 - 2.1)	High vs low strength requirement	Not stated	No	No	No
Ramirez G (1990)[47]	1960	1.75 (1.12 - 2.75)	Very heavy vs low physical demands	Not stated	No	No	Yes
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1985)[50]	580	4.11 (2.15 - 7.78)	Activity score (2/3 vs 0/1 strenuous items)	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	2262	2.13 (1.16 - 3.76)	Activity score (3/4 items vs none)	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1991)[52]	874	1.2 (0.5 - 2.5)	Activity score (2/3 vs 0/1 items)	Not stated	No	No	No

x/wk = times per week; x/day = times per day

JCQ – Job Content Questionnaire; O*NET – O*Net Resource Center directory of job attributes

¶ OR for preterm delivery (<37 wks) – also presented were premature rupture of membranes (OR 0.86, 95%CI 0.322-3.27) and very preterm delivery (<32 wks) (for which the scope for inflationary bias is rated higher - OR 4.57, 95%CI 1.65-12.64)

* delivery at <37 wks; for <32 wks the corresponding figure was 1.08 (P>0.05)

RR (relative risk) is used generically to encompass a variety of published effect measures (odds ratios, incidence density ratios, hazard ratios etc)

Table S4: Occupational activity and risk of being small-for-gestational age at delivery

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)	Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting	Pooled in meta-analysis
			Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding		
WEEKLY WORKING HOURS								
Cohort studies								
Bell JF (2008)[71]	3389	1.06 (0.75 - 1.48)	≥40 vs <40 h/w	Not stated	No	Yes	No	Yes
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1318	1.11 (0.66 - 1.88)	≥40 vs <40 h/wk	11 weeks	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1287	1.19 (0.70 - 2.01)	≥40 vs <40 h/wk	19 weeks	No	No	No	No
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	797	1.29 (0.67 - 2.47)	≥40 vs <40 h/wk	34 weeks	No	No	No	Yes[¶]
Jansen PW (2010)[79]	4403	1.01 (0.73 - 1.39)	≥40 vs 1-24 h/wk	≥25 weeks	No	No	No	Yes[†§]
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	479	1.42 (0.58 - 3.51)	≥40 vs 40 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1037	1.1 (0.7 – 1.7)	>46 vs 35-45 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1037	1.0 (0.6 - 1.8)	>46 vs 35-45 h/wk	Trimester 2	No	No	No	No
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	886	2.1 (0.6 - 7.0)	≥61 vs ≤50 h/wk	15 - 28 weeks	No	Yes	No	No
Vrijkotte TGM (2009)[88]	7135	1.1 (0.8 - 1.5)	≥32 vs 8-23 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No	No
Cross-sectional studies								
Bodin L (1999)[16]	1685	1.1 (0.7 - 1.9)	≥36 vs 21-35 h/wk	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No	No
Ceron-Mireles P (1996)[19]	2406	1.59 (1.14 - 2.22)	>50 vs 3-25 h/wk	Not stated	No	Yes	No	Yes
Fortier I (1995)[21]	1833	0.99 (0.7 - 1.39)	≥40 vs <30 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Klebanoff MA (1990)[28]	989	0.9 (0.6 - 1.3)	Residents (>100 h) vs others	Any	No	No	No	No
Savitz DA (1996)[54]	589	0.8 (0.6 - 1.2)	≥40 vs no paid work	5 months	No	No	No	Yes[†§]
Case-control studies								
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	1.0 (0.8 - 1.1)	≥40 vs 20-34 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	1.1 (0.8 -1.5)	≥40 vs 20-34 h/wk	Trimester 1 & 2 but not 3	No	No	No	Yes[¶]
Spinillo (1995)[56]	513	1.62 (0.93 - 2.85)	≥30 vs >30 h/wk	Trimester 2 & 3	No	No	No	No
SHIFT WORK								
Cohort studies								
Abeysena C (2009)[66]	690	1.47 (0.81 - 2.67)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards at work vs not	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No	No
Abeysena C (2009)[66]	600	2.25 (0.99 - 5.07)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards at work vs not	Trimester 2	Yes?	Yes	No	No

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting	Pooled in meta-analysis
				Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding		
Abeysena C (2009)[66]	550	3.31	(1.34 - 8.15)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards at work vs not	Trimester 3	Yes?	Yes	No	No
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1318	0.92	(0.43 - 1.97)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	11 weeks	No	No	No	Yes§
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1287	0.92	(0.41 - 2.06)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	19 weeks	No	No	No	Yes¶
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	479	1.32	(0.50 - 3.46)	Shifts vs none	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes§
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1796	1.3	(0.8 - 2.2)	Regular night work (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes§
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1796	1.4	(0.9 - 2.4)	Regular night work (yes vs no)	Trimester 2	No	No	No	Yes¶
Zhu JL (2004)[64]	35662	1.07	(0.94 - 1.21)	Rotating shift work vs daytime work	Trimesters 1 & 2	No	No	No	Yes†§
Cross-sectional studies									
Arafa MA (2007)[70]	730	1.96	(0.73 - 4.75)	Shifts vs mornings only	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bodin L (1999)[16]	1685	0.8	(0.4 - 1.8)	Night vs day	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No	Yes†
Fortier I (1995)[21]	4118	0.98	(0.75 - 1.27)	Shift work vs day only	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes§
Hanke W (1999)[22]	1064	1.0	(0.19 - 3.26)	Shift work (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes§
Nurminen T (1989)[42]	738	1.5	(1.0 - 2.4)	Shift work (yes vs no)	'Most of pregnancy'	No	Yes	No	Yes
Case-control studies									
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	0.8	(0.7 - 1.0)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes§
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	0.7	(0.4 - 1.1)	Night shifts (yes vs no)	Trimesters 1 & 2, not 3	No	No	No	Yes¶
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	1.2	(1.0 - 1.4)	Shift work vs regular work	Trimester 1	No	No	No	No
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	1.5	(1.0 - 2.1)	Shift work vs regular work	Trimesters 1 & 2, not 3	No	No	No	No
LIFTING									
Cohort studies									
Ahlborg GJ (1990)[13]	3389	0.65	(0.24 - 1.77)	≥12 kg >50 x/wk vs none	Not stated	No	No	No	-
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1318	1.09	(0.53 - 2.27)	Lifting ≥25 kg by hand	11 weeks	No	No	No	-
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1287	1.06	(0.44 - 2.55)	Lifting ≥25 kg by hand	19 weeks	No	No	No	-
Magann EF (2005)[33]	485	0.81	(0.47 – 1.41)	≥4 vs <4 h/d	Trimester 1	No	No	No	-
Magann EF (2005)[33]	318	0.59	(0.20 – 1.74)	Lifting ≥11kg >6x/hour	Trimester 1	No	No	No	-
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1176	1.2	(0.7 – 2.0)	Lifting ≥25 lbs ≥13 vs 0 x/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No	-
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	1176	1.2	((0.6 - 2.2)	Lifting ≥25 lbs ≥13 vs 0 x/wk	Trimester 2	No	No	No	-
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	1108	0.5	(0.1 - 1.7)	>12 kg, 1-10 x/d vs none	15 - 28 weeks	No	Yes	No	-

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)	Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting	Pooled in meta-analysis
			Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding		
Cross-sectional studies								
Fortier I (1995)[21]	3078	1.03 (0.71 - 1.51)	≥10 kg vs none	Not stated	No	No	No	-
Case-control studies								
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	1.0 (0.9 - 1.2)	≥7 vs 0 kg	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No	-
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	1.2 (0.9 - 1.6)	≥7 vs 0 kg	Trimesters 1 & 2, not 3	Yes	No	No	-
STANDING								
Cohort studies								
Abeysena C (2009)[66]	690	0.93 (0.61 - 1.40)	Standing/walking≥4 vs <4 h/d	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No	Yes
Abeysena C (2009)[66]	600	1.26 (0.79 - 2.02)	Standing/walking≥4 vs <4 h/d	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No	No
Abeysena C (2009)[66]	550	0.88 (0.55 - 1.44)	Standing/walking≥4 vs <4 h/d	Trimester 3	No	Yes	No	Yes[¶]
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	1287	1.06 (0.67 - 1.69)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <4 h/d	19 weeks	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Bonzini M (2009)[72]	797	0.86 (0.45 - 1.64)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <4 h/d	34 weeks	No	No	No	Yes[¶]
Launer LJ (1990)[31]	5035	1.21 (1.02 - 1.44)	Standing vs sitting	Not stated	No	Yes	No	No
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	977	1.1 (0.7 - 1.7)	>30 h/w vs 6-15 h/w	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Pompeii LA (2005)[45]	977	1.0 (0.6 - 1.5)	>30 h/w vs 6-15 h/w	Trimester 2	No	No	No	Yes[¶]
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	1121	2.0 (0.7 - 5.4)	≥5 vs ≤4 h/d	15 - 28 weeks	No	Yes	No	Yes[†§]
Vrijkotte TGM (2009)[88]	7055	1.0 (0.8 - 1.4)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <2.5 h/d	Trimester 1	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Cross-sectional studies								
Ceron-Mireles P (1996)[19]	2379	1.4 (1.03 - 1.91)	>7 vs ≤7 h/d	Not stated	No	Yes	No	No
Fortier I (1995)[21]	3502	1.42 (1.02 - 1.95)	≥6 vs <3 h/d	Not stated	No	No	No	Yes[§]
Hanke W (1999)[22]	1064	0.89 (0.48 - 1.62)	Mostly standing posture at work (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No	No
Nurminen T (1989)[43]	676	1.0 (0.4 - 2.3)	Standing work vs sedentary	Trimester 3	No	Yes	No	No
Case-control studies								
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	1.0 (0.8 - 1.2)	≥7 vs <2 h/d	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No	Yes
Croteau A (2006)[75]	5905	0.9 (0.6 - 1.3)	≥7 vs <2 h/d	Trimesters 1 & 2, not 3	Yes	No	No	Yes[¶]
Spinillo (1995)[56]	513	1.65 (0.90 - 3.03)	Standing/walking vs sitting	Trimester 2 & 3	Yes	No	No	No
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY								

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)	Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting	Pooled in meta-analysis
			Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding		
Cohort studies								
Bell JF (2008)[71]	3389	1.03 (0.91 - 1.17)	Work attribute index - running/ walking/climbing/standing time	Not stated	No	No	No	-
Gisselmann MD (2008)[77]	354389	0.97 P>0.05	High physical demands vs low	Not stated	No	Yes	No	-
Gollenberg AL (2011)[91]	1040	0.76 (0.46 - 1.25)	Third vs first quartile (occupational activity composite)	Trimester 1	No	No	No	-
Gollenberg AL (2011)[91]	1040	0.79 (0.47 - 1.34)	Third vs first quartile (occupational activity composite)	Trimester 2	No	No	No	-
Launer LJ (1990)[31]	5035	1.32 (1.12 - 1.56)	Manual vs office work	Not stated	No	Yes	No	-
Magann EF (1996)[34]	531	0.8 (0.42 - 1.45)	>2900 vs <2300 kcal/d energy expenditure	16 - 18 weeks	No	Yes	No	-
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	479	1.44 (0.53 -3.86)	Job very physically active vs less	Not stated	No	No	No	-
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	346	0.7 (0.2 - 3.2)	High vs low	15 - 28 weeks	No	Yes	No	-
Vrijkotte TGM (2009)[88]	7103	1.2 (0.9 - 1.7)	High vs low physical workload	Trimester 1	No	No	No	-
Cross-sectional studies								
Ceron-Mireles P (1996)[19]	2379	1.4 (1.03 - 1.91)	>7 vs ≤7 h/d	Not stated	No	Yes	No	-
Fortier I (1995)[21]	1829	0.87 (0.56 - 1.35)	'Important' vs none	Not stated	No	No	No	-
Hanke W (1999)[22]	1064	0.89 (0.48 - 1.62)	Mostly standing posture at work (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No	-
Nurminen T (1989)[43]	524	2.4 (1.3 - 4.6)	Work with a moderate physical load vs sedentary	Trimester 3	No	Yes	No	-
Case control studies								
Spinillo (1995)[56]	513	2.40 (1.36 - 4.21)	Moderate/heavy vs light physical effort at work	Trimester 2 & 3	Yes	No	No	-

h/wk = hours per week; h/d= hours per day; x/wk = times per week
RR (relative risk) is used generically to encompass a variety of published effect measures (odds ratios, incidence density ratios, hazard ratios etc)
§ contributed both to the overall meta-analysis and to sensitivity analysis
† contributed both to the overall meta-analysis and to meta-analysis of late pregnancy risk
¶ contributed only to meta-analysis of late pregnancy risk

Table S5: Risk of low birthweight and very low birthweight and pattern of occupational activity

Authors (date)	Outcome	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)	Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
				Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding*	
WEEKLY WORKING HOURS								
Cohort studies								
Hatch M (1997) [24]	LBW	188	1.2 (0.5 - 2.3)	>40 vs ≤20 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	LBW	148	1.1 (0.4 - 3.2)	>40 vs ≤20 h/wk	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	LBW	122	1.7 (0.6 - 5.0)	>40 vs ≤20 h/wk	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	LBW	538	1.80 (0.56 - 5.80)	≥40 vs <40 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	LBW	886	1.2 (0.6 - 2.3)	≥61 vs ≤50 h/wk	15 - 28 weeks	No	Yes	No
Cross-sectional studies								
Bodin L (1999)[16]	LBW	1685	1.5 (0.7 - 3.1)	≥36 vs 21-35 h/wk	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	LBW	unclear	1.24 P<0.05	≥46 vs <46 h/wk	Not stated	No	No	No
Peoples-Sheps MD (1991)[44]	LBW	2379	1.7 (1.03 - 2.68)	≥40 vs 21-39 h/wk	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	LBW	2375	0.96 (0.42 - 1.95)	≥42 vs <42 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	Yes	Yes
Savitz DA (1996)[54]	MLB	768	0.9 (0.8 - 1.1)	≥40 vs no paid work	5 months	No	No	No
Savitz DA (1996)[54]	VLB	696	0.9 (0.7 - 1.0)	≥40 vs no paid work	5 months	No	No	No
Case-control studies								
Herdt-Losavio ML (2011)[92]	LBW	283	1.43 (0.82 - 2.49)	>30 vs ≤30 h/wk	Not specified	Yes	No	No
SHIFT WORK								
Cohort studies								
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	LBW	739	1.13 (0.56 - 2.39)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards at work vs not	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	LBW	633	1.47 (0.55 - 3.93)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards at work vs not	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	LBW	583	0.71 (0.16 - 3.07)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards at work vs not	Trimester 3	No	Yes	No
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	<5th c SGA	690	1.50 (0.48 - 1.40)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards at work vs not	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	<5th c SGA	600	3.38 (1.38 - 8.29)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards at work vs not	Trimester 2	Yes?	Yes	No

Authors (date)	Outcome	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
					Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding*	
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	<5th c SGA	530	3.51	(1.23 - 9.99)	Shifts + exposure to physical/ chemical hazards at work vs not	Trimester 3	Yes?	Yes	No
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	LBW	538	0.92	(0.26 - 3.26)	Shift work vs none	Not stated	No	No	No
Xu X (1994)[63]	LBW	887	2.1	(1.1 - 4.1)	Rotating shift work (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No
Zhu JL (2004)[64]	LBW	35662	1.02	(0.68 - 1.51)	Rotating shift work vs daytime work	Trimesters 1 & 2	No	No	No
Cross-sectional studies									
Bodin L (1999)[16]	LBW	1685	1.9	(0.6 - 5.8)	Night vs day	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	LBW	unclear	1.38	P<0.01	Changing shift vs not	Not stated	No	No	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	LBW	2392	1.28	(0.4 - 3.21)	Night vs day	Trimester 1	No	Yes	Yes
LIFTING									
Cohort studies									
Ahlborg GJ (1990)[13]	LBW	3389	0.7	(0.29 - 1.68)	≥12 kg >50 x/wk vs none	Not stated	No	No	No
Burdorf A (2011)[89]	LBW	6201	0.75	(0.32 - 0.95)	>5 kg by hand, often/always vs. seldom/never	Not specified	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	LBW	569	0.6	(0.3 - 1.1)	High vs low	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	LBW	513	1.1	(0.6 - 2.1)	High vs low	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	LBW	479	1.3	(0.7 - 2.6)	High vs low	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	LBW	1108	0.5	(0.2 - 1.2)	>12 kg, 1-10 x/d vs none	15 - 28 weeks	No	Yes	No
Case-control studies									
Schramm WF (1996)[55]	MLB	1582	0.92	(0.8 - 1.14)	Carrying of loads >9 kg on most days (yes vs no)	'On most days'	No	Yes	No
Schramm WF (1996)[55]	VLB	1560	0.85	(0.69 - 1.04)	Carrying of loads >9 kg on most days (yes vs no)	'On most days'	Yes	Yes	No
Cross-sectional studies									
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	LBW	unclear	1.26	P<0.01	Lifting heavy weights ≥15 vs <15x/d	Not stated	No	No	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	LBW	2391	1.13	(0.74 - 1.71)	Carrying of heavy loads (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	Yes	Yes
Wergeland E (1998) [62]	LBW	1542	2.4	(1.3 - 4.4)	Lifting heavy loads (10-20 kg) (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	No	No
STANDING									

Authors (date)	Outcome	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
					Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding*	
Cohort studies									
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	LBW	739	0.72	(0.46 - 1.14)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs 4 h/d	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	LBW	633	1.60	(0.90 - 2.84)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs 4 h/d	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	LBW	583	1.28	(0.71 - 2.31)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs 4 h/d	Trimester 3	No	Yes	No
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	<5th c SGA	690	0.82	(0.48 - 1.40)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs 4 h/d	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	<5th c SGA	600	0.91	(0.50 - 1.63)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs 4 h/d	Trimester 2	Yes?	Yes	No
Abeysena C (2010)[67]	<5th c SGA	550	0.60	(0.31 - 1.11)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs 4 h/d	Trimester 3	Yes?	Yes	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	LBW	569	0.7	(0.3 - 1.3)	≥8 vs <8 h/d	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	LBW	511	0.7	(0.3 - 1.6)	≥8 vs <8 h/d	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	LBW	477	0.7	(0.3 - 1.6)	≥8 vs <8 h/d	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Teitelman AM (1990)[59]	LBW	708	1.58	(0.51 - 4.94)	Standing still >3 h/d vs continuous active motion	Trimester 1 (mostly)	No	No	No
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	LBW	1121	1.6	(0.8 - 16.5)	≥5 vs ≤4 h/d	15 - 28 weeks	No	Yes	No
Case-control studies									
Meyer BA (1985)[39]	LBW	5822	1.19	(0.96 - 1.48)	Standing vs sitting	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Schramm WF (1996)[55]	MLB	1582	1.06	(0.86 - 1.31)	>3 vs ≤3 h/d	'On most days'	No	Yes	No
Schramm WF (1996)[55]	VLB	1560	1.01	(0.82 - 1.24)	>3 vs ≤3 h/d	'On most days'	Yes	Yes	No
Cross-sectional studies									
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	LBW	-	1.02	P>0.05	Standing ≥8 vs <8 h/d	Not stated	No	No	No
Omokhodion FO (2010)[85]	LBW	993	1.92	(0.79 - 4.7)	<6 vs ≤6 h/d	Not stated	No	No	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	LBW	2400	1.13	(0.73 - 1.72)	Standing (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	Yes	Yes
Wergeland E (1998)[62]	LBW	1542	0.5	(0.3 - 1.0)	Standing/walking (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	No	No
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY									
Cohort studies									
Gisselmann MD (2008)[77]	LBW	355734	1.06	P<0.05	High physical demands vs low	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Gisselmann MD (2008)[77]	VLB	355734	1.06	P>0.05	High physical demands vs low	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Niedhammer D (2009)[84]	LBW	538	4.32	(1.24 - 15.0)	Job v physically active vs. less	Not stated	No	No	No
Tuntiseranee P (1998)[60]	LBW	346	1.1	(0.5 - 5.0)	High vs low	15 - 28 weeks	No	Yes	No
Cross-sectional studies									
Homer CJ (1990)[26]	LBW	773	2.7	(1.5 - 4.8)	High vs low exertion job	Not stated	No	No	No
McDonald AD (1988)[37]	LBW	unclear	1.02	P>0.05	Great physical effort (Yes vs No)	Not stated	No	No	No

Authors (date)	Outcome	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
					Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding*	
Meyer (2007)[82]	LBW	26408	0.99	(0.87 - 1.13)	Highest physical demands (JCQ)	Not stated	No	No	No
Meyer (2007)[82]	LBW	26408	1.13	(0.99 - 1.29)	Highest physical demands (O*NET)	Not stated	No	No	No
Omokhodion FO (2010)[85]	LBW	993	1.43	(0.88 - 2.34)	Physical exertion (yes vs no)	Not stated	No	No	No
Peoples-Sheps MD (1991)[44]	LBW	502	0.6	(0.1 - 2.2)	High vs low strength requirement	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1985)[50]	LBW	587	1.64	(0.65 - 3.79)	Activity score (2/3 vs 0/1 strenuous items	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1987)[51]	LBW	2389	1.95	(1.1 - 3.34)	Activity score (3/4 items vs none)	Trimester 1	No	Yes	Yes

LBW - low birthweight
MLB - moderately low birthweight
VLB - very low birthweight
RR – measure of relative risk
<5th c SGA – below the 5th centile after allowing for gestational age

* As described in the text, risk estimates were classified as having a higher potential for confounding if they did not take account both of smoking and at least one of: socioeconomic status, maternal height, or pre-pregnancy weight. Additionally, outcomes in this table do not allow for gestational age.

Table S6: Mean differences in birthweight by pattern of occupational activity

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	Mean difference (grams) (95% CI)	Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
			Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding*	
WEEKLY WORKING HOURS							
Cohort studies							
Hatch M (1997) [24]	188	-70.8 (-201.7 to 60.1)	>40 vs ≤20	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	148	-57 (-203.2 to 89.2)	>40 vs ≤20	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	122	-82.2 (-238 to 73.6)	>40 vs ≤20	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Jansen PW (2010)[79]	4408	-45 (-89 to -1)	>40 vs 1-24 h/wk	>25 weeks	No	No	No
Vrijkotte TGM (2009)[88]	7135	-43 (-80 to -6)	>32 vs 8-23 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Cross-sectional studies							
Bodin L (1999)[16]	1685	-60 (-112 to -8)	≥36 vs 21 - 35)	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Klebanoff MA (1990)[28]	989	-32 -	residents (>100 h) vs others	Any	No	Yes	No
Lima M (1999)[95]	250	-70 (-198 to 70)	≥30 vs 9-29 h/wk	Trimester 2 & 3	No	Yes	No
Wergeland E (1998)[62]	3159	-84 (-124 to -44)	≥35 vs <35	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No
SHIFT WORK							
Cohort studies							
Both MI (2010)[73]	8879	27.6 (11.8 to 43.5)	Night shifts vs not	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Both MI (2010)[73]	8879	91.4 (-15.0 to 197.8)	Night shifts vs not	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Both MI (2010)[73]	~11720	1.7 (-12.8 to 16.2)	Shifts vs not	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Both MI (2010)[73]	~11720	45.5 (-10.3 to 101.3)	Shifts vs not	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Xu X (1994)[63]	887	-79 (-161 to 3)	Rotating shift vs not	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Zhu JL (2004)[64]	35662	10 (-8 to 28)	Rotating shift work vs daytime work	Trimesters 1 & 2	No	Yes	No
Cross-sectional studies							
Axelsson G (1989)[14]	52	-312 (-705 to 81)	Rotating shift vs days, birth order 2 non-smokers	Trimesters 2 & 3	No	Yes	Yes
Axelsson G (1989)[14]	67	195 (-169 to 559)	Rotating shift vs days, birth order 1 non-smoker	Trimesters 2 & 3	No	Yes	Yes
Axelsson G (1989)[14]	25	-421 (-1043 to 202)	Rotating shift vs days, birth order 2 smokers	Trimesters 2 & 3	No	Yes	Yes
Axelsson G (1989)[14]	58	-438 (-996 to 90)	Rotating shift vs days, birth	Trimesters 2 & 3	No	Yes	Yes

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	Mean difference (grams) (95% CI)	Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
			Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding*	
			order 1 smoker				
Bodin L (1999)[16]	1685	36 (-46 to 119)	Night vs day shift	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No
Bodin L (1999)[16]	1685	39 (-45 to 123)	Three shifts vs day	Trimester 2	No	Yes	No
Lin YC (2011)[93]	101	-273 (-431 to -116)	Day-night rotating shifts (persistent vs. never)	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes
LIFTING							
Cohort studies							
Florack E (1995)[20]	128	-21 (-209 to 167)	≥1 vs <1 h/d	Pre-pregnancy	No	No	Yes
Hatch M (1997) [24]	569	18.9 (-69.8 to 107.7)	High vs low	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	513	-44.8 (-147.1 to 57.5)	High vs low	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	479	-23.6 (-135.7 to 88.5)	High vs low	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Cross-sectional studies							
Wergeland E (1998)[62]	3274	11 (-34 to 56)	Lifting heavy loads (10 - 20 kg) (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No
STANDING							
Cohort studies							
Brink-Henriksen T (1995)[17]	4249	-40 (-107 to 27)	≥4 vs <4 h/d uninterrupted	16 weeks	No	No	No
Brink-Henriksen T (1995)[17]	4249	-49 (-108 to 10)	>5 vs ≤2 h/d	16 weeks	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	569	1.8 (-98.4 to 102)	≥8 vs <8 h/d	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	511	-0.8 (-123.5 to 121.9)	≥8 vs <8 h/d	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	477	-30.7 (-149.5 to 88.1)	≥8 vs <8 h/d	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Klebanoff MA (1990)[29]	7101	-32 -	≥8 vs 0 h/d	1 - 5 months	No	No	No
Teitelman AM (1990)[59]	708	-24.7 (-111.6 to -62.2)	Standing still >3 h/d vs continuous active motion	Trimester 1 (mostly)	No	No	No
Vrijkotte TGM (2009)[88]	7055	-18 (-55 to 19)	Standing/walking ≥4 vs <2.5 h/d	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Cross-sectional studies							
Ha E (2002)[94]	950	-27.8 (-87.2 to 31.6)	Standing ≥3 vs < 3 h/d	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Wergeland E (1998)[62]	3284	20 (-20 to 60)	Standing/walking (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	Yes	No

Authors (date)	Numbers in analysis	Mean difference (grams) (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
				Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding*	
Zuckerman (1986)[65]	942	2	-	Standing at work (yes vs no)	Trimester 3	No	Yes	Yes
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY								
Cohort studies								
Florack E (1995)[20]	128	-60	(-256 to 136)	High vs low intensity score	6 - 22 wks	No	No	Yes
Florack E (1995)[20]	118	-58	(-236 to 120)	High vs low intrensity score	23 - 30 wks	No	No	Yes
Florack E (1995)[20]	98	-67	(-265 to 131)	High vs low intensity score	31 - 40 weeks	No	No	Yes
Hatch M (1997) [24]	569	-49.6	(-177.4 to 78.2)	High vs low	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	511	-21.6	(-179.6 to 136.4)	High vs low	Trimester 2	No	No	No
Hatch M (1997) [24]	477	-51.7	(-216.3 to 112.9)	High vs low	Trimester 3	No	No	No
Klebanoff MA (1990)[29]	7100	51	-	Heavy work vs not	1 - 5 months	No	No	No
Magann EF (1996)[34]	531	183	(40 to 326)	>2900 vs <2300 kcal/d energy expenditure	16 - 18 weeks	No	Yes	No
Rao S (2003)[48]	433	-111	(-155 to -67)	High vs low activity (farming)	18 weeks	No	Yes	No
Vrijkotte TGM (2009)[88]	7055	-21	(-64 to 22)	High vs low physical workload	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Cross-sectional studies								
Homer CJ (1990)[26]	773	-160	(-230 to -89)	High vs low exertion	Not stated	No	No	No
Tafari N (1980)[58]	41	-204	(-424 to 16)	Hard vs light work, maternal wt <49 kg	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes
Tafari N (1980)[58]	61	-164	(-344 to 16)	Hard vs light work, maternal wt 49 - 58 kg	Not stated	No	Yes	Yes
Tafari N (1980)[58]	28	-216	(-605 to 173)	Hard vs light work, maternal wt >58 kg	Not stated	No	No	Yes

* As described in the text, risk estimates were classified as having a higher potential for confounding if they did not take account both of smoking and at least one of: socioeconomic status, maternal height, or pre-pregnancy weight. Additionally, we sought evidence that account was taken of gestational age.

Table S7: Occupational activity and the risks of pre-eclampsia and pregnancy-induced hypertension

Authors (date)	Outcome	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)	Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
				Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding	
WEEKLY WORKING HOURS								
Cohort studies								
Landsbergis PA (1996)[30]	PIH	575	1.1 (0.2 - 5.7)	41-49 vs <35 h/wk	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Jansen PW (2010)[79]	PIH	4327	0.76 (0.47 - 1.24)	≥40 vs 1-24 h/wk	≥25 weeks	No	No	No
Jansen PW (2010)[79]	PE	4327	0.96 (0.50 - 1.84)	≥40 vs 1-24 h/wk	≥25 weeks	No	No	No
Case-control studies								
Marcoux S (1999)[36]	PIH	267	0.85 (0.48 - 1.54)	≥35 vs ≤21 h/wk	First 20 weeks	No	No	No
Haelterman E (2007)[78]	PIH	4480	1.1 (0.5 - 2.4)	>40 vs 20-34 h/wk	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
Haelterman E (2007)[78]	PE	4483	1.2 (0.6 - 2.5)	>40 vs 20-34 h/wk	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
Cross-sectional studies								
Chang P-J (2010)[74]	PIH	12404	1.18 (0.90 – 1.55)	>40 vs. ≤ 40 h/wk	Not stated	No	Yes*	No
SHIFT WORK								
Cross-sectional studies								
Nurminen T (1989)[42]	PIH	890	0.9 (0.4 - 1.9)	2 or 3 shift work vs none	'Most of pregnancy'	No	Yes	No
Wergeland E (1997)[61]	PE	3281	1.3 (0.8 - 1.9)	Shift work (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Case-control studies								
Haelterman E (2007)[78]	PIH	4480	1.0 (0.5 - 2.0)	≥1 vs. 0 night work hrs/wk	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
Haelterman E (2007)[78]	PE	4483	1.0 (0.5 - 2.0)	≥1 vs. 0 night work hrs/wk	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
LIFTING								
Case-control studies								
Haelterman E (2007)[78]	PIH	4480	1.1 (0.7 - 1.7)	≥7 kg, ≥10x/d vs. never	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
Haelterman E (2007)[78]	PE	4483	1.1 (0.7 - 1.7)	≥7 kg, ≥10x/d vs. never	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
Cross-sectional studies								
Irwin DE (1994)[27]	PIH	2413	1.1 (0.8 - 1.6)	≥13.6 vs ≤4.5 kg/d	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Irwin DE (1994)[27]	PE	2420	0.68 (0.47 - 0.98)	≥13.6 vs ≤4.5 kg/d	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Wergeland E (1997)$_{61}$	PE	3284	1.7 (1.2 - 2.5)	Lifting heavy loads (10-20 kg) (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No

Authors (date)	Outcome	Numbers in analysis	RR (95% CI)		Exposure		Higher potential for		Incomplete reporting
					Comparison	Timing	Bias	Confounding	
STANDING									
Cohort studies									
Saftlas AF (2004)[49]	PIH	1009	1.26	(0.83 - 1.91)	Sitting <34% vs ≥67% of the time	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Saftlas AF (2004)[49]	PE	1009	0.72	(0.32 - 1.59)	Sitting <34% vs ≥67% of the time	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Case-control studies									
Haelterman E (2007)[78]	PIH	4480	0.7	(0.4 - 1.6)	≥1 vs 0 hrs stood on the spot	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
Haelterman E (2007)[78]	PE	4483	2.9	(1.7 - 5.0)	≥1 vs 0 hrs stood on the spot	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
Cross-sectional studies									
Irwin DE (1994)[27]	PIH	2882	1.0	(0.71 - 1.4)	≥2/3 vs ≤1/3 of time	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Nurminen T (1989)[42]	PIH	687	1.1	(0.6 - 2.0)	Standing work vs sedentary	Trimester 3	Yes	Yes	No
Irwin DE (1994)[24]	PE	2879	0.82	(0.57 - 1.2)	≥2/3 vs ≤1/3 of time	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Wergeland E (1997)[61]	PE	3294	0.7	(0.5 - 1.0)	Standing/walking (yes vs no)	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY									
Cohort studies									
Landsbergis PA (1996)[30]	PIH	575	0.7	(0.2 - 2.5)	Physical activity score (>200 vs ≤200)	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Landsbergis PA (1996)[30]	PE	575	0.7	(0.2 - 2.5)	Physical activity score (>200 vs ≤200)	Trimester 1	No	No	No
Case-control studies									
Spinillo A (1995)[56]	PE	480	2.1	(1.18 - 3.75)	Activity score (moderate/high vs mild/none)	Trimester 1	Yes	No	No
Cross-sectional studies									
Irwin DE (1994)[24]	PIH	2665	1.2	(0.83 - 1.6)	≥2/3 vs ≤1/3 of time	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Irwin DE (1994)[24]	PE	2668	0.75	(0.52 - 1.1)	≥2/3 vs ≤1/3 of time	Not stated	No	Yes	No
Nurminen T (1989)[42]	PIH	529	1.1	(0.4 - 3.2)	Work with a moderate physical load vs sedentary	Trimester 3	Yes	Yes	No
Saurel-Cubizolles MJ (1985)[50]	PIH	591	3.47	(2.04 - 5.83)	Activity score (2/3 vs 0/1 strenuous items)	Not stated	Yes	Yes	Yes

h/wk = hours per week; kg/d = kilograms per day
PIH - Gestational hypertension
PE - Pre-eclampsia
RR (relative risk) is used generically to encompass a variety of published effect measures (odds ratios, incidence density ratios, hazard ratios etc)
* Crude analysis is presented here to provide a baseline of working, rather than unemployed women (but BMI and parity appeared to have little effect on the results