Results 9,369 women returning to the same job within 1 year after delivery were included. Among them, 8,478 (90.5%) mothers returned to work after more than 2 months, when they would be assumed to have a full-paid maternity leave. Compared with those having stationary workload, those suffering from increased job stress during pregnancy had a 1.72 times greater risk of later RTW - between 6 and 12 months, after adjusting for potential confounders. Moreover, among those not returning to work more than 2 months after delivery, the aOR of later RTW was 2.0 (95% CI: 1.25, 3.19) among those with increased job stress.

Conclusions In this prospective birth cohort study, mothers’ prenatal work conditions were significantly related to later RTW for those returning to work within 1 year after childbirth.