

## High-Definition Scans Suggest Effects of Smoking May Be Seen in Unborn Babies

A study published in the journal *Acta Paediatrica* suggests the facial movements of unborn infants imaged via 4-d ultrasound scanning may reflect the detrimental effects of smoking while pregnant. Such imaging found fetuses with smoking mothers exhibited a significantly higher rate of mouth movements than the normal declining rate of movements expected in a fetus during pregnancy. The researchers examined 80 4-d ultrasound scans of 20 fetuses, to evaluate subtle mouth and touch movements. Scans were conducted at four different intervals between 24 and 36 weeks of pregnancy. Four of the fetuses belonged to mothers who smoked an average 14 cigarettes per day, while the other 16 were being carried by non-smoking mothers. All fetuses were clinically assessed and were healthy upon delivery. The researchers also uncovered evidence of a longer lag in the reduction of facial touching by fetuses whose mothers smoked versus fetuses of non-smokers, although this delay was less significant.