Garlic for preventing pre-eclampsia and its complications

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Authors' objectives
Background: The suggestion that garlic may lower blood pressure, inhibit platelet aggregation, and reduce oxidative stress has led to the hypothesis that it may have a role in preventing pre-eclampsia and its complications. Objectives: To assess the effects of garlic on prevention of pre-eclampsia and its complications. Search methods: We searched the Cochrane Pregnancy and Childbirth Group's Trials Register (January 2010). Selection criteria: Studies were included if they were randomised trials evaluating the effects of garlic on prevention of pre-eclampsia and its complications. Data collection and analysis: Two review authors independently selected trials for inclusion and extracted data. Data were entered on Review Manager software for analysis, and double checked for accuracy. Main results: One trial (100 women) of uncertain quality compared garlic with placebo. Another study was excluded as 29% of women were lost to follow up. There was no clear difference between the garlic and control groups in the risk of developing gestational hypertension (relative risk (RR) 0.50, 95% confidence interval (CI) 0.25 to 1.00) or pre-eclampsia (RR 0.78, 95% CI 0.31 to 1.93). Women allocated garlic were more likely to report odour than those allocated placebo (RR 8.50, 95% CI 2.07 to 34.88), but there were no significant differences in other reported side-effects. The only other outcomes reported were caesarean section (RR 1.35, 95% CI 0.93 to 1.95), and perinatal mortality. There were no perinatal deaths in the study. Authors' conclusions: There is insufficient evidence to recommend increased garlic intake for preventing pre-eclampsia and its complications. Although garlic is associated with odour, other more serious side-effects have not been reported. Further large randomised trials evaluating the effects of garlic are needed before any recommendations can be made to guide clinical practice.


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