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**Jefferson Study: Women with Celiac Disease More Likely
to Have Trouble Conceiving, Pre-Term Births**
Wins Award from American College of Gastroenterology

(PHILADELPHIA) Stephanie M. Moleski, MD, an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University's Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, will present data today at a session entitled, **Infertility and Pregnancy Outcomes in Celiac Disease**, showing that women with celiac disease report a higher likelihood than other women of having difficulty with conception and pregnancy, including a greater chance of preterm birth. She is presenting her findings at the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) Scientific Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Said study author Moleski: "Celiac disease is becoming more common and it often affects women in their fertile period. In some women infertility and pregnancy complications may be the first sign of celiac disease. This is a very important aspect of women's health. Both physicians and patients must be aware of the association between celiac and reproductive performance so that treatment with a gluten free diet can be initiated early and complications can be avoided."

The study won the ACG/Radhika Srinivasan Gender-Based Research Award, given to work in identifying gender-based differences in gastrointestinal diseases. The ACG/Radhika Srinivasan Gender-Based Research Award is named in honor of Radhika Srinivasan, MD, MACG, and presented in conjunction with ACG's Women in Gastroenterology Committee.

Dr. Moleski surveyed 1,022 women to learn more about their experiences with fertility and pregnancy in the context of celiac disease. Untreated celiac disease has been associated with menstrual abnormalities and pregnancy complications, but studies up to now have been inconsistent.

Her results: 41 percent of women surveyed with celiac disease had trouble conceiving, compared to 36.5 percent without celiac disease. The survey also showed that 43 percent reported spontaneous abortions prior to their diagnosis with celiac disease, compared to 37 percent without celiac disease. Twenty-three percent of women with celiac disease surveyed described pre-term pregnancies, compared to 14 percent of women who did not have celiac disease. All the findings are statistically significant, according to the report.

Patients from the Jefferson Celiac Center and members of the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness and Gluten Intolerance Group completed the anonymous, on-line survey. Only the 298 patients who had been diagnosed using small bowel biopsy were surveyed. Five-hundred sixty control patients who were not diagnosed with celiac disease also completed the survey. The study asked questions about patients' celiac diagnosis, menstrual history, fertility, spontaneous abortions, and pregnancy outcomes.

[Thomas Jefferson University](#) (TJU), the largest freestanding academic medical center in Philadelphia, is nationally renowned for medical and health sciences education and innovative research. Founded in 1824, TJU includes Jefferson Medical College (JMC), one of the largest private medical schools in the country and ranked among the nation's best medical schools by *U.S. News & World Report*, and the Jefferson Schools of Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions, Population Health and the College of Graduate Studies. Jefferson University Physicians is TJU's multi-specialty physician practice consisting of the full-time faculty of JMC. Thomas Jefferson University partners with its clinical affiliate, Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals.

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