PROJECT RESUME

There is a suggested higher incidence of congenital abnormalities, particularly low birthweight, in babies born from in vitro fertilisation (IVF). The underlying cause of this has not yet been identified, but it may be linked to the IVF procedure itself, the underlying parental infertility, or the high levels of antenatal progesterone which the fetus is exposed to during IVF. Pilot studies demonstrated that offspring from these rats exposed to high concentrations of progesterone are born with low birth weight. The placentae from these rats are also smaller with altered blood vessel morphology. This project will investigate changes in blood vessel density and the possible relationship with reduced placental weight. Insight from this project might provide new understanding into the low birthweight and congenital abnormalities caused by IVF.