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## First-born of young mums likely to live longer

First-born children of young mothers have the best chance of living to 100, new research suggests.

Scientists in the US made the discovery after reconstructing the family histories of 198 centenarians born between 1875 and 1899.

They found that first-born children were 1.7 times more likely than their siblings to live to 100.

Having a young mother at the time of birth was an even stronger predictor of longevity.

People whose mothers were aged under 25 when they were born were twice as likely to survive beyond a century, New Scientist magazine reported.

The researchers suspect the age of the mother is the important factor.

First-born children are more likely to have younger mothers, and young mothers may have better quality eggs.

They may also be less likely to have acquired infections that might cause long term damage to the health of the foetus.

Dr Natalia Gavrilova, from the University of Chicago in the US, who co-led the research, told New Scientist: "If the best, most vigorous maternal ova cells are used first - very early in life - this could explain why particularly young mothers produce particularly long-lived children."

The findings were presented at a meeting of the Gerontological Society of America in Dallas, Texas, this week.

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