Miscarriage ‘likelier with older expectant dad or mum’

SINGAPORE — Women who experience bleeding in the early stages of pregnancy are at risk of a miscarriage but that risk goes up if the expectant parents are older or if the woman has a history of miscarriage and has low blood progesterone (hormonal) level during pregnancy.

These are the findings from a first-of-its-kind study conducted among pregnant women in Singapore by the KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital (KKH) and the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School.

According to the study, early pregnancy bleeding resulted in complete miscarriage in about one in four women (26.9 per cent).

Also, fathers who are above 40 years old added an eight-fold risk of miscarriage, and a mother older than 34 years was two-fold more likely to miscarry.

Assistant Professor Tan Thiam Chye, a principal investigator for the study, said it can be inferred from the findings that the biological clock ticks not only in the woman but also in the father-to-be.

The study was conducted among KKH patients from November last year to March this year, involving 139 women with threatened miscarriage.

The findings of this study will be presented at the 6th KKH Annual Scientific Meeting on Friday.

A larger study would be needed to validate the risk levels revealed by these preliminary findings, said Asst Prof Tan.