Marmosets offer clue to human stillbirths, programmed while mom is in grandma’s womb

One way to learn about reproductive health is to observe how our primate cousins have babies. And a new study on marmosets offers some hints about the causes of stillbirth. It suggests that a mother’s health during pregnant may not be the whole story. In fact, some of the risk factors may arise before mothers are even born.

The first thing that one notices about the white-tufted ear marmoset (Callithrix jacchus) is its wildly adorable face–a tiny visage framed by shocks of white fur. Marmosets are interesting to scientists not because they’re cute, but because of their intriguing way of having kids. While most primate females have a single offspring at a time, marmoset typically have twins. Some marmoset mothers even have triplets.

Despite all the help, however, female marmosets sometimes have stillbirths. The risk of stillbirth wasn’t just part of an overall problem with fertility. Triplet females were just as likely to get pregnant as twin females. It’s just that they were less likely to carry their pregnancies to a successful term.

Read the full, original story: From Womb to Womb