

1 Platelet counts during normal pregnancies and pregnancies complicated with hypertensive  
2 disorders

3

4 Takafumi Ushida<sup>1,2</sup>, Tomomi Kotani<sup>1,2</sup>, Yoshinori Moriyama<sup>3</sup>, Kenji Imai<sup>1</sup>, Tomoko Nakano-  
5 Kobayashi<sup>1</sup>, Fumie Kinoshita<sup>4</sup>, Noriyuki Nakamura<sup>1</sup>, Yukako Iitani<sup>1</sup>, Shigeru Yoshida<sup>5</sup>,  
6 Mamoru Yamashita<sup>5</sup>, Hiroaki Kajiyama<sup>1</sup>

7

8 <sup>1</sup>Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine,  
9 Nagoya, Japan

10 <sup>2</sup>Division of Perinatology, Center for Maternal-Neonatal Care, Nagoya University Hospital,  
11 Nagoya, Japan

12 <sup>3</sup>Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Fujita Health University School of Medicine,  
13 Toyoake, Japan

14 <sup>4</sup>Data Science Division, Data Coordinating Center, Department of Advanced Medicine,  
15 Nagoya University Hospital, Nagoya, Japan

16 <sup>5</sup>Kishokai Medical Corporation, Nagoya, Japan

17

18 Corresponding author: Takafumi Ushida, M.D., Ph.D.

19 Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine,

20 65 Tsurumai-cho, Showa-ku, Nagoya 466-8550, Japan

21 Tel: +81-52-744-2261

22 Fax: +81-52-744-2268

23 E-mail: u-taka23@med.nagoya-u.ac.jp

24

25 **Running title**

26 Platelet counts during pregnancy

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

## Abstract

### 40 **Objectives**

41 To determine the trajectories of platelet counts and the prevalence of gestational  
42 thrombocytopenia ( $<150 \times 10^9/L$ ) during normal pregnancies and pregnancies with  
43 complications, such as hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (HDP), preeclampsia, and fetal  
44 growth restriction (FGR).

### 45 **Study design**

46 A multicenter retrospective study was conducted using laboratory data on women who  
47 delivered term singletons in 11 primary maternity care units between 2011 and 2018 ( $n =$   
48 35,045), and non-pregnant women who underwent a medical check-up between 2016 and 2019  
49 ( $n = 61,189$ ). After 1:1 matching, 28,073 pregnant women and 28,073 non-pregnant women  
50 were selected for analysis.

### 51 **Main outcomes measures**

52 The trajectories of platelet counts and prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia were  
53 evaluated in normal pregnant women, pregnant women with complications, and non-pregnant  
54 women.

### 55 **Results**

56 The platelet counts declined throughout pregnancy state, with the nadir occurring on  
57 postpartum day 1. The platelet counts recovered to the level of the non-pregnant state at 2–7

58 days postpartum. The mean platelet counts at postpartum day 1 decreased by an estimated  
59 19.8% and 9.7% compared to those in the non-pregnant state and first trimester, respectively.  
60 The prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia in normal pregnant women at 37–41  
61 gestational weeks and in pregnant women with complications of HDP, preeclampsia, and FGR  
62 were 6.1%, 7.3%, 17.5%, and 7.7%, respectively.

### 63 **Conclusion**

64 Platelet counts declined throughout pregnancy and recovered to the level of the non-pregnant  
65 state in the early postpartum period. Gestational thrombocytopenia is common during normal  
66 pregnancy, and its prevalence is significantly higher in women with preeclampsia.

67

68 **Keywords:** fetal growth restriction, gestational thrombocytopenia, hypertensive disorders of  
69 pregnancy, platelet count, preeclampsia

70

### 71 **Abbreviations**

72 FGR, fetal growth restrictions; HDP, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy; ITP, idiopathic  
73 thrombocytopenia purpura; PP, postpartum; SGA, small for gestational age; TTP, thrombotic  
74 thrombocytopenia purpura.

75

76

77

## Introduction

78 Several reports have suggested that platelet counts during pregnancy are lower than those in  
79 non-pregnant women, and that approximately 6%–11% of normal pregnant women experience  
80 a platelet count of less than  $150 \times 10^9/L$  during pregnancy (1, 2). This is described as gestational  
81 thrombocytopenia if no alternative cause (e.g., preeclampsia, HELLP syndrome, idiopathic  
82 thrombocytopenic purpura [ITP], thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura [TTP], and systemic  
83 lupus erythematosus) is identified (3, 4). This slight decrease in platelet counts may be  
84 associated with various physiological changes related to pregnancy, such as hemodilution,  
85 increased consumption due to the increased size of the spleen, and increased circulation of  
86 platelets in the placenta (3, 5, 6).

87

88 However, a previous systematic review, published in 2017, demonstrated an apparent  
89 inconsistency regarding the platelet count trajectory during pregnancy, depending on the study  
90 design (longitudinal or cross-sectional), population (race and study sample size), and stage of  
91 pregnancy (5). In addition, they could not conclude that the platelet counts during pregnancy  
92 were lower than those observed in non-pregnant women.

93

94 A recent retrospective study, published in 2018, demonstrated that platelet counts  
95 during pregnancy were lower than those in non-pregnant populations using race -, ethnic -, and

96 age-matched non-pregnant women and that platelet counts decreased throughout pregnancy,  
97 beginning in the first trimester (7). However, among the 4,568 normal pregnant women, only  
98 336 women had consecutive data on platelet counts at each trimester and at the time of delivery.  
99 Although the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia was higher in women with pregnancy  
100 complications than in those without complications (11.9% vs. 9.9%,  $p=0.01$ ), little evidence  
101 was available regarding the trajectories of platelet counts in each pregnancy complication, such  
102 as hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (HDP), preeclampsia, and fetal growth restriction  
103 (FGR).

104

105           Understanding the reference range and trajectory of platelet counts throughout  
106 pregnancy, as well as during the postpartum period enables clinicians to differentiate between  
107 normal physiological changes during pregnancy and pathological changes (e.g., ITP, TTP,  
108 preeclampsia, and HELLP syndrome). In addition, regarding platelet counts in the diagnostic  
109 criteria of preeclampsia, the definition of low platelet counts varies according to different  
110 guidelines or by country because of the lack of sufficient data on platelet counts during normal  
111 pregnancies (8-12).

112

113           Thus, the aim of this retrospective study was to determine the trajectory of platelet  
114 counts and prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia during normal pregnancies using

115 clinical data from 11 maternity care units in Japan. We then compared these results with those  
116 of matched non-pregnant women. In addition, we sought to compare the trajectories of platelet  
117 counts and the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia between pregnancies without  
118 complications and those with placenta-associated complications, such as HDP, preeclampsia,  
119 and FGR.

120

121

## Materials and Methods

122 We conducted a multicenter retrospective study analyzing clinical data on platelet counts in  
123 women who delivered at 37<sup>0/7</sup> to 41<sup>6/7</sup> gestational weeks at 11 primary maternity care units  
124 from January 2011 to December 2018. All units were located in the Aichi and Gifu Prefectures  
125 in Japan; they cared for women with low- to moderate-risk pregnancies, with each unit  
126 conducting 300–1000 deliveries annually.

127

128 This study included women who delivered term singletons at these units. To evaluate  
129 the trajectory of platelet counts during normal pregnancy, we excluded the following: preterm  
130 delivery (<37 weeks of gestation); post-term delivery ( $\geq$ 42 weeks of gestation); multiple  
131 pregnancy; stillbirth; presence of major congenital and chromosomal abnormalities,  
132 preexisting disorders (hematologic disease, liver disease, renal failure, autoimmune disease,  
133 collagen disease, or cancer), and pregnancy complications (gestational diabetes mellitus, HDP,

134 HELLP syndrome, placental abruption, placenta previa, low-lying placenta, or FGR); and  
135 incomplete data on medical records (age, height, and weight). To compare the trajectories of  
136 platelet counts between pregnancies without any complications and those with HDP and FGR  
137 among women who delivered term singletons at these units, clinical data of women with HDP  
138 and FGR were extracted for analysis.

139

140 HDP was defined as systolic blood pressure  $\geq 140$  mmHg or diastolic blood pressure  
141  $\geq 90$  mmHg during pregnancy (10). Preeclampsia was defined as hypertension with any one of  
142 the following: proteinuria ( $\geq 0.3$  g/day, or  $\geq 1+$  on a urine dipstick), end-organ dysfunction (e.g.,  
143 liver involvement [aspartate aminotransferase  $>40$  IU or alanine aminotransferase  $>40$  IU], low  
144 platelet count [ $<150 \times 10^9/L$ ], Cr  $>1.0$  mg/dL, and eclampsia), or uteroplacental dysfunction  
145 (i.e., FGR) after 20 weeks of gestation. In this study, FGR was defined as infants born small  
146 for gestational age (SGA); SGA was defined as birth weight and height below the 10<sup>th</sup>  
147 percentile for gestational age according to a sex-specific Japanese neonatal anthropometric  
148 chart in 2000 (13).

149

150 Platelet counts were measured in EDTA-anticoagulated blood using standard  
151 automatic blood cell counters (Celltac  $\alpha$  MEK-6500, NIHON KOHDEN Corporation, Japan).  
152 Mean platelet counts were evaluated at seven different time points: first trimester (6–12 weeks



153 of gestation), second trimester (13–27 weeks of gestation), first half of the third trimester (28–  
154 36 weeks of gestation), second half of the third trimester (37–41 weeks of gestation), 1 day  
155 postpartum, 2–7 days postpartum, and 3–7 weeks postpartum. The platelet counts of most  
156 women who delivered vaginally were measured at four time points (first, second, and second  
157 half of the third trimester, and 1 day postpartum). The platelet counts of women who delivered  
158 by cesarean section were measured at six time points (first, second, first and second half of the  
159 third trimester, 1 day and 2–7 days postpartum). Additional measurements were performed  
160 based on clinical needs. If multiple measurements of platelet counts were conducted during the  
161 same period, we used the first measurement for analysis. In this study, a total of 17,121 women  
162 (61.0% of final study population) had data on platelet count data at each trimester and during  
163 the postpartum period. Plausible ranges were defined as platelet counts  $<1,000 \times 10^9/L$ , and  
164 outliers were excluded from further analyses. Here, we evaluated the trajectory of mean platelet  
165 counts during pregnancy and in the postpartum period in uncomplicated and complicated (HDP,  
166 preeclampsia, and FGR) pregnancies.

167

168         The clinical information extracted from each unit was anonymized and incorporated  
169 into the study for further analysis. The collected maternal information included maternal age,  
170 parity, gestational age, mode of delivery, pre-pregnancy body weight, height, and pregnancy  
171 complications (gestational diabetes mellitus, HDP, HELLP syndrome, placental abruption,

172 placenta previa, low-lying placenta, and FGR); neonatal information included sex, birth weight,  
173 height, and SGA.

174

175           We compared laboratory data on platelet counts in non-pregnant women (n = 61,189)  
176 who underwent a routine medical check-up from 2016 to 2019 in a medical clinic group in  
177 Aichi Prefecture, Japan with those obtained from pregnant women. The medical clinic group  
178 conducted comprehensive medical examinations for approximately 30,000 patients per year.  
179 Platelet counts were measured using an automatic clinical biochemistry analyzer (XE-2100 and  
180 XN-2000, Sysmex Corporation, Kobe, Japan; and ADVIA2120i, Siemens Healthcare, Tokyo,  
181 Japan). We excluded women with the following (n = 5,837): (1) hematologic disease, (2)  
182 anemia, (3) gastrointestinal disease, (4) hepatobiliary and pancreatic diseases, (5) renal failure,  
183 (6) cancer, (7) diabetes mellitus or hyperlipidemia, (8) thyroid disease, (9) hypertension or  
184 ischemic heart disease, (10) rheumatoid arthritis, and (11) incomplete data (age, body weight,  
185 and height). Pregnant and non-pregnant women were randomly selected at a ratio of 1:1 from  
186 30,394 pregnant and 55,352 non-pregnant women after stratification by three factors (age, body  
187 weight, and height). The 1:1 matching was based on the categories of age ( $\leq 24$ , 25–29, 30–34,  
188 35–39, and  $\geq 40$  years), body weight (<45 kg, 45–50 kg, 50–55 kg, 55–60 kg, and  $\geq 60$  kg), and  
189 height (<155 cm, 155–160 cm, 160–165 cm, and  $\geq 165$  cm).

190

191 This study was approved by the institutional ethics board of Nagoya University  
192 (approval number 2015–0415), Kishokai Medical Corporation, and Central Clinic Group.  
193 Informed consent was waived because the analysis used anonymous clinical data collected  
194 retrospectively.

195

196 Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 27 software (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL,  
197 USA). Categorical variables were compared using chi-squared tests, and continuous variables  
198 were compared using the Student's *t* test or Mann-Whitney U-test. Statistical significance was  
199 set at  $p < 0.05$ .

200

201

## Results

202 Among 35,045 women with laboratory data on platelet counts who delivered between 37<sup>0/7</sup> to  
203 41<sup>6/7</sup> weeks of gestation at these units during the study period, a total of 30,394 women were  
204 eligible for matching, and 4,651 women were excluded (Figure 1). Among 61,189 non-  
205 pregnant women younger than 45 years of age who underwent laboratory testing between 2016  
206 and 2019, 55,352 women were eligible for matching, and 5,837 women were excluded. After  
207 1:1 matching based on three factors (age, weight, and height), 28,073 pregnant women and  
208 28,073 non-pregnant women were selected for analysis.

209

210 Table 1 shows the baseline characteristics of pregnant and non-pregnant women in this  
211 study. Categories of age, body weight, and height between pregnant and non-pregnant women  
212 were equally divided.

213

214 Supplementary Figure 1 shows the distribution of platelet counts for the non-pregnant  
215 state, first (6–12 gestational weeks) and third (28–36 gestational weeks) trimesters, and  
216 postpartum day 1. The distribution of platelet counts gradually shifted to the left from the non-  
217 pregnant state to postpartum period.

218

219 Figure 2 shows the trajectory of mean platelet counts with 95% confidence interval  
220 (CI) in the non-pregnant and pregnant states as well as during the postpartum state. The platelet  
221 count in the first trimester was significantly lower than that in the non-pregnant state. The  
222 platelet counts declined throughout pregnancy, with the nadir occurring on postpartum day 1.  
223 The platelet counts recovered to the level seen in the non-pregnant state between days 2 and 7  
224 postpartum. The mean platelet counts at postpartum day 1 decreased by an estimated 19.8%  
225 and 9.7% compared to those in the non-pregnant state and first trimester, respectively.

226

227 Table 2 shows the mean and 2.5th, 50th, and 97.5th percentiles for platelet counts as  
228 well as the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia ( $<150 \times 10^9/L$  and  $<100 \times 10^9/L$ ) in the

229 non-pregnant state, during pregnancy, and in the postpartum period among the 28,073 normal  
230 pregnant women and 28,073 non-pregnant women. The prevalence of gestational  
231 thrombocytopenia ( $<150 \times 10^9/L$ ) was 6.1% and 8.3% in the second half of the third trimester  
232 and on postpartum day 1, respectively. The prevalence of platelet count  $<100 \times 10^9/L$  was  
233 considerably rare throughout pregnancy and during the postpartum period. The lower limit  
234 (2.5th percentile) of platelet counts during normal pregnancy was  $129 \times 10^9/L$  in the second  
235 half of the third trimester.

236

237         Next, we evaluated the trajectories of mean platelet counts in women with pregnancy  
238 complications, such as HDP (n = 1,814) and FGR (n = 624). The specific types of HDP were  
239 gestational hypertension (n = 1,015), preeclampsia (n = 527), chronic hypertension (n = 238),  
240 and superimposed preeclampsia (n = 33). Figure 3 shows the trajectories of mean platelet  
241 counts with 95% CI in uncomplicated pregnancies (n = 28,073) and pregnancies complicated  
242 by HDP and preeclampsia. We found that the platelet counts in pregnant women with HDP  
243 were higher during pregnancy than those in women without any pregnancy complications;  
244 however, the platelet counts near delivery were comparable. The platelet counts in women with  
245 preeclampsia were similar to those in women with HDP during the period from the first  
246 trimester to the first half of the third trimester; however, the platelet counts in the second half  
247 of the third trimester were significantly lower. Among the 527 women with preeclampsia, 45

248 women (8.5%) presented with gestational thrombocytopenia (platelet count  $<150 \times 10^9/L$ ) in  
249 the third trimester. Of these 45 women, 24 did not show proteinuria and were diagnosed with  
250 non-proteinuric preeclampsia. In total, 79 women (15.0%) in this study were diagnosed with  
251 non-proteinuric preeclampsia (low platelet count [n=24], liver involvement [n=11], renal  
252 dysfunction [n=6], FGR [n=41], and eclampsia [n=3]; items are not mutually exclusive) among  
253 527 women with preeclampsia. The prevalence of non-proteinuric preeclampsia diagnosed  
254 with hematological adverse conditions (gestational thrombocytopenia) was 4.6% among  
255 women with preeclampsia (n = 527) and 30.4% among women with non-proteinuric  
256 preeclampsia (n = 79). Supplementary Table 1 shows the mean, the 2.5th, 50th, and 97.5th  
257 percentiles for platelet counts, and the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia in pregnant  
258 women with complications of HDP. Supplementary Table 2 shows the platelet counts and  
259 prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia in each type of HDP.

260

261 Figure 4 shows the trajectories of platelet counts in uncomplicated pregnancies (n =  
262 28,073) and in women with pregnancies complicated with FGR (n = 624). The platelet counts  
263 during pregnancy and the postpartum period were comparable between the two groups.  
264 Supplementary Table 3 shows the mean, the 2.5th, 50th, and 97.5th percentiles for platelet  
265 counts, and the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia in pregnant women with FGR.

266

267           The prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia was significantly higher in women  
268 with preeclampsia (17.5%,  $p<0.01$ ) than in those with normal pregnancies (6.1%) at 37–41  
269 weeks, while it was not significantly increased in women with HDP (7.3%,  $p=0.25$ ) or FGR  
270 (7.7%,  $p=0.38$ ). In contrast, the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia on postpartum day  
271 1 was significantly higher in women with HDP (10.0%,  $p=0.01$ ) and preeclampsia (14.5%,  
272  $p<0.01$ ) than in those with normal pregnancies (8.3%), but it was not significantly increased in  
273 women with FGR (10.0%,  $p=0.14$ ) (Supplementary Table 1–3).

274

275

## Discussion

276 In this multicenter retrospective study, we demonstrated the trajectories of platelet counts and  
277 the reference range during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Our main findings of this  
278 study were that platelet counts declined throughout pregnancy, with the nadir occurring at  
279 postpartum day 1, and that the platelet counts returned to the level of the non-pregnant state  
280 between days 2 and 7 postpartum. The prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia (platelet  
281 count  $<150 \times 10^9/L$ ) in normal pregnancy was 6%–8% at term and postpartum period, while it  
282 increased to 7%–17% in pregnant women with complications of HDP, preeclampsia, and FGR.  
283 In addition, we found that the prevalence of non-proteinuric preeclampsia diagnosed with  
284 gestational thrombocytopenia was 4.6% among women with preeclampsia.

285

286           Our study results were consistent with those of previous studies demonstrating that  
287 platelet counts during pregnancy were lower than those in the non-pregnant state and that they  
288 decreased throughout pregnancy (7, 14). We found that the average decline in the mean platelet  
289 count during normal pregnancy was approximately 20% from the non-pregnant state to  
290 postpartum day 1, which was similar to values obtained in previous studies (20.5% and 21.7%,  
291 respectively) (7, 14). In addition, approximately half of the total decline had already occurred  
292 during the first trimester. However, whether the underlying mechanism of rapid decline during  
293 the first trimester is due to either physiological changes associated with pregnancy or the study  
294 design issue remains uncertain. There is a possibility that this could be explained by the fact  
295 that we could not compare platelet counts between the pregnant and non-pregnant states in the  
296 same individual; however, we selected the matched non-pregnant women by using three factors  
297 to reduce selection bias risk. Further research is required to elucidate the mechanisms  
298 underlying the rapid decline in platelet counts.

299

300           Understanding the laboratory changes accompanying the different trimesters during  
301 normal pregnancy is important for clinicians to facilitate early recognition and timely diagnosis,  
302 manage gestational thrombocytopenia, and differentiate between normal physiological changes  
303 related to pregnancy and pathological changes. In addition, the reference range of platelet  
304 counts in normal pregnancy may be of value for the establishment of diagnostic criteria for



305 preeclampsia because the definition of low platelet counts in the diagnosis of preeclampsia  
306 differs based on the guidelines used and the country. Several guidelines, including those of the  
307 International Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy, the Japan Society of  
308 Obstetrics and Gynecology, and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, define  
309 a low platelet count as  $<150 \times 10^9/L$  in the diagnosis of preeclampsia, while the guidelines of  
310 the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists define  $<100 \times 10^9/L$  as the cutoff;  
311 the guidelines of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada define  $<50 \times 10^9/L$   
312 as the threshold (9-12). According to our study, the lower limit of the normal range (2.5th  
313 percentile) was  $152 \times 10^9/L$ ,  $140 \times 10^9/L$ , and  $129 \times 10^9/L$  at 13–27, 28–36, and 37–41  
314 gestational weeks, respectively. Thus, there were possibly more normal women who were  
315 diagnosed with non-proteinuric preeclampsia due to lower platelet counts during the third  
316 trimester compared with those in the second trimester. Considering the change in the lower  
317 limit of platelet counts according to the trimester, we could understand the difference in the  
318 pathological implication even if the platelet counts were the same in different trimesters (e.g.,  
319  $140 \times 10^9/L$  at 10 gestational weeks vs.  $140 \times 10^9/L$  at 40 gestational weeks).

320

321 In this study, the platelet counts in women with HDP were significantly higher before  
322 the onset of HDP, especially during the first and second trimesters, than those in women without  
323 any pregnancy complications. This is consistent with a previous study (15); however,

324 consensus has yet to be reached. Although the underlying mechanisms of increased platelet  
325 counts in women with HDP remain unclear, possible explanations are as follows: [1] women  
326 who will develop HDP may have a potential risk for systemic chronic inflammation (16, 17),  
327 which contributes to the activation and increase of platelets (18, 19); and [2] platelet counts are  
328 known to be positively associated with BMI and body weight (20, 21). Thus, the difference in  
329 baseline characteristics regarding physique between normal pregnancies and HDP may affect  
330 platelet counts. In fact, we found that the pre-pregnancy body weight and BMI in normal  
331 pregnancies and HDP in this study were  $51.9 \pm 7.9$  kg and  $56.7 \pm 11.3$  kg ( $p < 0.001$ ), and  $20.8$   
332  $\text{kg/m}^2$  and  $22.7 \text{ kg/m}^2$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), respectively. To reduce these differences, we randomly  
333 selected women without any complications and with HDP at a ratio of 2:1 after stratification  
334 by three factors: maternal age, height, and pre-pregnancy body weight. The platelet counts in  
335 the normal pregnant women and women with HDP at 6–12 weeks and 13–27 weeks were  $243$   
336  $\pm 48 \times 10^9/\text{L}$  and  $249 \pm 49 \times 10^9/\text{L}$ , and  $236 \pm 48 \times 10^9/\text{L}$  and  $242 \pm 49 \times 10^9/\text{L}$ , respectively.  
337 The difference in platelet counts between the two groups was significantly decreased by  
338 stratification matching; however, there was still a significant difference (approximately  $6 \times$   
339  $10^9/\text{L}$ ), indicating that the underlying mechanisms of increased platelet counts in women with  
340 HDP may have been mainly associated with systemic chronic inflammation. However, further  
341 studies are needed to elucidate the underlying mechanism.

342

343           The strengths of this study were that the sample size was much larger than that of prior  
344 studies (7, 14), and a total of 17,121 women (61.0%) had consecutive data on platelet counts  
345 at each trimester and postpartum period. In addition, we evaluated platelet counts at seven time  
346 periods and compared them between women with uncomplicated pregnancies and pregnant  
347 women with different complications. Finally, with the larger population size and more centers  
348 where the clinical data were obtained, the generalizability of this study was increased compared  
349 to that of previous studies. Furthermore, we compared platelet counts between pregnant and  
350 non-pregnant women after adjusting for age, weight, and height.

351

352           Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, we excluded women  
353 who did not deliver at the 11 specified maternity care units; thus, we could not deny the  
354 possibility that women with severe thrombocytopenia may have been referred to higher-level  
355 facilities before delivery because these 11 maternity care units cared only for low-risk  
356 pregnancies and did not have a blood bank on site. As previously described, we could not  
357 compare platelet counts between non-pregnant and pregnant states in the same individual.

358

359           In conclusion, platelet counts declined throughout pregnancy and recovered to the  
360 level observed in the non-pregnant state in the early postpartum period. Gestational  
361 thrombocytopenia was common during normal pregnancy and the postpartum period, while its

362 prevalence before delivery was significantly higher in pregnant women with preeclampsia.  
363 Understanding the trajectory of platelet counts may facilitate the differentiation between  
364 normal physiological changes related to pregnancy and pathological changes.

365

### 366 **Acknowledgement**

367 We would like to thank Ms. Yasuyo Shirata for acquisition of laboratory data for the non-  
368 pregnant cases in this study. We would like to thank Editage for English language editing.

369

### 370 **Funding**

371 This study was supported by a grant from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS  
372 KAKENHI 19K18637) awarded to TU.

373

374

### **References**

- 375 1. Boehlen F, Hohlfeld P, Extermann P, Perneger TV, de Moerloose P. Platelet count at term  
376 pregnancy: a reappraisal of the threshold. *Obstetrics and gynecology*. 2000;95(1):29-33.
- 377 2. Burrows RF, Kelton JG. Fetal thrombocytopenia and its relation to maternal  
378 thrombocytopenia. *The New England journal of medicine*. 1993;329(20):1463-6.
- 379 3. ACOG Practice Bulletin No. 207: Thrombocytopenia in Pregnancy. *Obstetrics and*  
380 *gynecology*. 2019;133(3):e181-e93.
- 381 4. Myers B. Diagnosis and management of maternal thrombocytopenia in pregnancy. *British*  
382 *journal of haematology*. 2012;158(1):3-15.
- 383 5. Reese JA, Peck JD, McIntosh JJ, Vesely SK, George JN. Platelet counts in women with  
384 normal pregnancies: A systematic review. *American journal of hematology*. 2017;92(11):1224-32.
- 385 6. Ciobanu AM, Colibaba S, Cimpoa B, Peltecu G, Panaitescu AM. Thrombocytopenia in  
386 Pregnancy. *Maedica*. 2016;11(1):55-60.

- 387 7. Reese JA, Peck JD, Deschamps DR, McIntosh JJ, Knudtson EJ, Terrell DR, et al. Platelet  
388 Counts during Pregnancy. *The New England journal of medicine*. 2018;379(1):32-43.
- 389 8. ACOG Practice Bulletin No. 202: Gestational Hypertension and Preeclampsia. *Obstetrics  
390 and gynecology*. 2019;133(1):e1-e25.
- 391 9. Webster K, Fishburn S, Maresh M, Findlay SC, Chappell LC. Diagnosis and management  
392 of hypertension in pregnancy: summary of updated NICE guidance. *BMJ (Clinical research ed)*.  
393 2019;366:15119.
- 394 10. Makino S, Takeda J, Takeda S, Watanabe K, Matsubara K, Nakamoto O, et al. New  
395 definition and classification of "Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy (HDP). *Hypertension  
396 Research in Pregnancy*. 2019;7(1):1-5.
- 397 11. Brown MA, Magee LA, Kenny LC, Karumanchi SA, McCarthy FP, Saito S, et al.  
398 Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy: ISSHP Classification, Diagnosis, and Management  
399 Recommendations for International Practice. *Hypertension*. 2018;72(1):24-43.
- 400 12. Magee LA, Pels A, Helewa M, Rey E, von Dadelszen P. Diagnosis, evaluation, and  
401 management of the hypertensive disorders of pregnancy: executive summary. *Journal of obstetrics  
402 and gynaecology Canada : JOGC = Journal d'obstetrique et gynecologie du Canada : JOGC*.  
403 2014;36(7):575-6.
- 404 13. Itabashi K, Miura F, Uehara R, Nakamura Y. New Japanese neonatal anthropometric  
405 charts for gestational age at birth. *Pediatrics international : official journal of the Japan Pediatric  
406 Society*. 2014;56(5):702-8.
- 407 14. Li-Xia Z, Ning D, Rui-Xia Y, Ang L, Xuan-Mei L, Nan Y, et al. Platelet counts during  
408 pregnancy in Chinese women. *Journal of Laboratory Medicine*. 2020(0):20190142.
- 409 15. Örgül G, Aydın Hakkı D, Özten G, Fadiloğlu E, Tanacan A, Beksaç MS. First trimester  
410 complete blood cell indices in early and late onset preeclampsia. *Turkish journal of obstetrics and  
411 gynecology*. 2019;16(2):112-7.
- 412 16. Borzychowski AM, Sargent IL, Redman CW. Inflammation and pre-eclampsia. *Semin  
413 Fetal Neonatal Med*. 2006;11(5):309-16.
- 414 17. Redman CW, Sargent IL. Preeclampsia and the systemic inflammatory response. *Semin  
415 Nephrol*. 2004;24(6):565-70.
- 416 18. Stokes KY, Granger DN. Platelets: a critical link between inflammation and  
417 microvascular dysfunction. *J Physiol*. 2012;590(5):1023-34.
- 418 19. Koupenova M, Clancy L, Corkrey HA, Freedman JE. Circulating Platelets as Mediators  
419 of Immunity, Inflammation, and Thrombosis. *Circ Res*. 2018;122(2):337-51.
- 420 20. Samocha-Bonet D, Justo D, Rogowski O, Saar N, Abu-Abeid S, Shenkerman G, et al.  
421 Platelet counts and platelet activation markers in obese subjects. *Mediators Inflamm*.  
422 2008;2008:834153.
- 423 21. Coban E, Ozdogan M, Yazicioglu G, Akcıt F. The mean platelet volume in patients with  
424 obesity. *International Journal of Clinical Practice*. 2005;59(8):981-2.

425

426 **Figure legends**

427 Figure 1. Flow diagram of the study population. Laboratory data on platelet counts were  
428 collected for 35,045 pregnant women and 61,189 non-pregnant women. After 1:1 matching to  
429 adjust for three factors (age, weight, and height), a total of 28,073 pregnant women and 28,073  
430 non-pregnant women were selected for analysis. \* indicates items not mutually exclusive.

431

432 Figure 2. Trajectory of mean platelet counts when non-pregnant, during pregnancy, and at the  
433 postpartum periods. Mean platelet counts with 95% confidence interval at non-pregnant state  
434 and four prenatal (6–12 weeks, 13–27 weeks, 28–36 weeks, and 37–41 weeks) and three  
435 postpartum (postpartum day 1, days 2–7, and weeks 3–7) periods are shown. PP, postpartum.

436

437 Figure 3. Trajectories of mean platelet counts in normal pregnant women and women with  
438 pregnancy complicated by HDP and preeclampsia. Mean platelet counts with 95% confidence  
439 interval at four prenatal and three postpartum periods are shown. HDP, hypertensive disorders  
440 of pregnancy; PP, postpartum.

441

442 Figure 4. Trajectories of platelet counts in normal pregnant women and women with  
443 pregnancies complicated with FGR. Mean platelet counts with 95% confidence interval at four  
444 prenatal and three postpartum periods are shown. FGR, fetal growth restrictions; PP,

445 postpartum.

446

447 Supplementary Figure 1. The distributions of platelet counts during the non-pregnant state, first

448 and third trimesters, and the postpartum period.

449

450

451

452

453

454

455

456

457

458

459

460

461

462

463

464

465

466

467

468

469

470

471

472

473

474

475

476

477

478

479

480 Table 1. Baseline characteristics of pregnant and non-pregnant women

Characteristics	Pregnant women n = 28,073	Non-pregnant women n = 28,073
Maternal characteristics		
Maternal age (years)	30.8 ± 4.9	30.8 ± 5.2
Category of maternal age		
<25 years	2,698	2,698
25–29 years	9,068	9,068
30–34 years	9,484	9,484
35–39 years	5,879	5,879
≥40 years	944	944
Gestational age at delivery (weeks)	39.6 ± 1.2	
Cesarean section (%)	4,057/27,525 (14.7)	
Primipara (%)	13,968/28,073 (49.8)	
Pre-pregnancy body weight (kg)	51.9 ± 7.9	52.5 ± 8.6
Category of body weight		
<45 kg	4,144	4,144
45–50 kg	7,844	7,844
50–55 kg	7,700	7,700
55–60 kg	4,370	4,370
≥60 kg	4,015	4,015
Height (cm)	158 ± 5.4	159 ± 5.4
Category of height		
<155 cm	7,082	7,082
155–160 cm	9,695	9,695
160–165 cm	7,985	7,985
≥165 cm	3,311	3,311
Neonatal characteristics		
Male (%)	14,139/27,635 (51.2)	
Birth weight (g)	3,100 ± 354	
Height (cm)	49.8 ± 1.6	

481 Date are shown as mean ± standard deviation, or n (%).

482

483

484

485



Table 2. The mean and 2.5th, 50th, and 97.5th percentiles for platelet counts and the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia at non-pregnant state, during pregnancy, and postpartum period.

	non-pregnant n = 28,073	6–12 wk n = 18,534	13–27 wk n = 21,546	28–36 wk n = 26,825	37–41 wk n = 5,091	PP 1 day n = 26,931	PP 2–7 day n = 4,809	PP 3–7 wk n = 626
Average time point		GA 10.9 wk	GA 23.8 wk	GA 31.5 wk	GA 37.7 wk	PP 1 day	PP 4.5 day	PP 4.8 wk
Platelet counts								
Mean $\pm$ SD ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	268 $\pm$ 58	238 $\pm$ 48	231 $\pm$ 47	225 $\pm$ 49	221 $\pm$ 53	215 $\pm$ 52	261 $\pm$ 65	244 $\pm$ 61
2.5 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	170	155	152	140	129	127	149	148
50 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	260	234	227	221	218	210	257	233
97.5 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	400	341	335	335	337	328	403	386
<150 ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	196 (0.7)	343 (1.9)	474 (2.2)	1,172 (4.4)	309 (6.1)	2,224 (8.3)	127 (2.6)	19 (3.0)
<100 ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	22 (0.1)	13 (0.7)	8 (0.0)	22 (0.1)	16 (0.3)	81 (0.3)	12 (0.2)	0 (0)

GA, gestational age; PP, postpartum. Data on the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia are shown as n (%).

Supplementary Table 1. The mean and 2.5th, 50th, and 97.5th percentiles for platelet counts and the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia during pregnancy and postpartum period in women with hypertensive disorders of pregnancy.

	6–12 wk n = 1,229	13–27 wk n = 1,449	28–36 wk n = 1,700	37–41 wk n = 532	PP 1 day n = 1,700	PP 2–7 day n = 537	PP 3–7 wk n = 55
Average time point	GA 10.8 wk	GA 23.7 wk	GA 31.3 wk	GA 38.1 wk	PP 1 day	PP 4.5 day	PP 4.7 wk
Platelet counts							
Mean ± SD ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	250 ± 50	243 ± 49	237 ± 51	226 ± 57	216 ± 56	270 ± 70	271 ± 84
2.5 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	170	161	153	121	119	146	171
50 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	246	240	232	222	211	268	267
97.5 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	358	344	353	348	338	414	496
<150 ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	6 (0.5)	19 (1.3)	31 (1.8)	39 (7.3)	170 (10.0)	18 (3.4)	0 (0)
<100 ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.4)	14 (0.8)	4 (0.7)	0 (0)

GA, gestational age; PP, postpartum. Data on the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia are shown as n (%).



Superimposed preeclampsia	n = 27	n = 33	n = 33	n = 13	n = 28	n = 13	n = 1
Mean $\pm$ SD ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	250 $\pm$ 47	246 $\pm$ 46	243 $\pm$ 46	237 $\pm$ 49	232 $\pm$ 59	309 $\pm$ 78	291
2.5 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	166	151	155	184	121	221	291
50 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	247	243	246	212	239	287	291
97.5 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	333	321	326	328	334	473	291
<150 ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	0 (0)	1 (3.0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0)	3 (10.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<100 ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

---

GA, gestational age; PP, postpartum. Data on the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia are shown as n (%).

Supplementary Table 3. The mean and 2.5th, 50th, and 97.5th percentiles for platelet counts and the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia during pregnancy and postpartum period in women with fetal growth restriction.

	6–12 wk n = 418	13–27 wk n = 526	28–36 wk n = 1,052	37–41 wk n = 183	PP 1 day n = 613	PP 2–7 day n = 151	PP 3–7 wk n = 13
Average time point	GA 10.9 wk	GA 23.9 wk	GA 33.3 wk	GA 37.8 wk	PP 1 day	PP 4.7 day	PP 5.0 wk
Platelet counts							
Mean ± SD ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	236 ± 51	235 ± 49	229 ± 53	214 ± 51	214 ± 54	262 ± 69	231 ± 62
2.5 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	152	152	142	105	125	156	134
50 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	232	230	224	213	207	253	227
97.5 <sup>th</sup> percentile ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	345	336	340	314	334	416	344
<150 ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	10 (2.4)	9 (1.7)	44 (4.2)	14 (7.7)	61 (10.0)	3 (2.0)	1 (7.7)
<100 ( $\times 10^9/L$ )	1 (0.2)	3 (0.6)	6 (0.6)	5 (2.7)	3 (0.5)	1 (0.7)	0 (0)

GA, gestational age; PP, postpartum. Data on the prevalence of gestational thrombocytopenia are shown as n (%).