University team give hope on miscarriages

Researchers at the University of Warwick say they have made a breakthrough on recurrent miscarriage.

A team led by the university has published new data that could prove vital for advances in care for women who suffer from recurrent miscarriage.

Their findings add weight to current research centering on the role of natural killer cells (or NK cells) and the ability of steroids to prevent miscarriage, which scientists had been uncertain about.

The research team, led by Professor Jan Brosens, has found elevated uterine NK cells in the lining of the womb indicate deficient production of steroids, which in turn leads to reduced formation of fats and vitamins that are essential for pregnancy nutrition. The study, published in The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, is the first of its kind to provide an explanation for why high levels of NK cells can cause miscarriage.

Professor Siobhan Quenby, professor of obstetrics at Warwick Medical School, explained: “This work is really exciting because after years of controversy and doubt we have a crucial breakthrough.”

The research was supported by the Biomedical Research Unit in Reproductive Health, a joint initiative between University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust and Warwick Medical School.