

No link between antidepressants and birth defects

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Expectant mothers can safely use prescribed antidepressants during their first trimester, according to a new study from the Université de Montréal and Ste. Justine Hospital published in the May edition of the *British Journal of Psychiatry*.

Dr. Anick Bérard and her team found that antidepressants have no effect on foetal development. “This is the first study to investigate the impact of antidepressant use during the first trimester of pregnancy in mothers with psychiatric disorders,” she said. “In terms of birth malformations in this population, we found no difference between women who used antidepressants and those who did not use antidepressants during their first trimester.”

The research team used data from the Quebec Pregnancy Registry, established by their group, to analyze the records of 2,329 new mothers diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder and treated with antidepressants for at least 30 days before pregnancy. Also included in the registry were women who delivered liveborn and stillborn children, while birth defects were considered anything from facial malformations to heart anomalies.

“The duration of antidepressant use in the first trimester of pregnancy was not associated with an increased risk of birth malformations,” explained Dr. Bérard. “We hope these findings help clinicians and women decide whether to continue antidepressant therapy during pregnancy.”

Source: University of Montreal

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