

Occupational exposures put nurses at risk of miscarriage

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(HealthDay) -- Nurses face an increased risk of spontaneous abortions during early pregnancy from occupational exposure to antineoplastic drugs and sterilizing agents, according to a study published in the April issue of the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

To investigate the correlation between occupational exposures and spontaneous abortion among U.S. nurses, Christina C. Lawson, Ph.D., of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Cincinnati, and associates conducted a retrospective study of 7,482 participants of the Nurses'

Health Study II. [Occupational exposure](#) to antineoplastic drugs, anesthetic gases, antiviral drugs, sterilizing agents (disinfectants), and X-rays was self-reported.

The researchers identified 6,707 live births and 775 spontaneous abortions before 20 weeks of pregnancy. After adjustment for age, parity, shift work, and hours worked, antineoplastic [drug](#) exposure was found to be correlated with a two-fold elevated risk of spontaneous abortion before the 12th week, and a 3.5-fold elevated risk among nulliparous women. Data showed that sterilizing agent exposure was linked to a two-fold higher risk of spontaneous abortion between weeks 12 and 20, but not earlier during pregnancy.

"This study suggests that certain occupational exposures common to nurses are related to risks of spontaneous abortion," the authors conclude. "We encourage [nurses](#) who are pregnant, or who wish to become pregnant, to work with their employers and their health care providers to reduce exposures during pregnancy and lactation."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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