

# Study finds increase in maternal opiate use, infants born with drug withdrawal syndrome

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Between 2000 and 2009 in the United States, the annual rate of maternal opiate use increased nearly 5-fold, while diagnosis of the drug withdrawal syndrome among newborns, neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), increased almost 3-fold, accompanied by a substantial increase in hospital charges related to NAS, according to a study published online by JAMA. The study is being released early to coincide with its presentation at the Pediatric Academic Societies Annual Meeting.

A recent national study indicated that 16.2 percent of pregnant teens and 7.4 percent of pregnant women aged 18 to 25 years use illicit drugs, according to background information in the article. Neonatal abstinence syndrome "most commonly occurs in the context of antepartum [before birth] opiate use, although other drugs have also been implicated. In addition to NAS, illicit drug use (specifically opioid dependence) during pregnancy is associated with a significantly increased risk of adverse neonatal outcomes such as [low birthweight](#) (

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