

Rx use in pregnancy common in low-income women

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(HealthDay)—Prescription medications are commonly dispensed to pregnant women enrolled in the U.S. Medicaid program, according to research published in the September issue of *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

Kristin Palmsten, Sc.D., of the University of California in San Diego, and colleagues examined patterns for [prescription drugs](#) dispensed from 2000 to 2007 among a cohort of 1,106,757 pregnant women enrolled in the U.S. Medicaid program.

The researchers found that during pregnancy, 82.5 percent of the women received one or more prescription medications, including at least one dispensing of a former U.S. Food and Drug Administration category D or X medication (excluding fertility treatments) in 42.0 percent. The medications most commonly dispensed included nitrofurantoin (21.6

percent), metronidazole (19.4 percent), amoxicillin (18.0 percent), azithromycin (16.9 percent), and promethazine (13.5 percent). Certain medications were dispensed at a higher rate among women younger than 20 years than among those aged 35 years or older, such as nitrofurantoin (23.9 versus 15.4 percent; prevalence ratio [PR], 1.55), metronidazole (20.7 versus 12.0 percent; PR, 1.73), and azithromycin (21.1 versus 11.0 percent; PR, 1.93). Dispensing rates were highest among white women for most drugs, but metronidazole was dispensed at a higher rate among black women compared with white women (29.8 versus 14.4 percent; PR, 2.07). The most commonly dispensed D medications were codeine (11.9 percent) and hydrocodone (10.2 percent).

"The characterization of [prescription medication](#) use among [pregnant women](#) enrolled in Medicaid augments our knowledge of medication use during pregnancy by providing information from low-income women," the authors write.

Several authors work in a department that receives training grants from pharmaceutical companies.

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