

Aerial spraying to combat mosquitos linked to increased risk of autism in children

April 30 2016

New research to be presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies 2016 Meeting suggests that the use of airplanes to spray anti-mosquito pesticides may increase the risk of autism spectrum disorder and developmental delays among children.

Researchers who will present the abstract, "Aerial Pesticide Exposure Increases the Risk of Developmental Delay and Autism Spectrum Disorder," identified a swampy region in central New York where health officials use airplanes to spray pyrethroid pesticides each summer. The pesticides target mosquitos that carry the [eastern equine encephalitis](#) virus, which can cause swelling of the brain and spinal cord. They found that children living in ZIP codes in which aerial pesticide spraying has taken place each summer since 2003 were approximately 25 percent more likely to have an autism diagnosis or documented [developmental delay](#) compared to those in ZIP codes with other methods of pesticide distribution, such as manually spreading granules or using hoses or controlled droplet applicators.

"Other studies have already shown that [pesticide exposure](#) might increase a child's risk for [autism spectrum disorder](#) or developmental delay," said lead investigator Steven Hicks, MD PhD. "Our findings show that the way pesticides are distributed may change that risk. Preventing mosquito-borne encephalitis is an important task for public health departments," he said. "Communities that have pesticide programs to help control the mosquito population might consider ways to reduce child pesticide exposure, including alternative application

methods."

More information: [www.abstracts2view.com/pas/view ...
?nu=PAS16L1_1508.488](http://www.abstracts2view.com/pas/view?nu=PAS16L1_1508.488)

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

Citation: Aerial spraying to combat mosquitos linked to increased risk of autism in children (2016, April 30) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-04-aerial-combat-mosquitos-linked-autism.html>

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