

Study found brain abnormalities in fetuses exposed to Zika

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In a study to be presented Friday, Jan. 27, in the oral concurrent session, at the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine's annual meeting, The Pregnancy Meeting, researchers with the Baylor College of Medicine Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Houston, Texas partnered with the Maternal-Fetal Unit, CEDIFETAL, Centro de Diagnostico de Ultrasonido e Imagenes, CEDIUL, Barranquilla, Columbia and the Unidad De Fertilidad Y Genetica De Cartagena, Cartagena de Indias, Columbia, to create the study, Characterization of brain malformations and volume assessment in fetuses with Zika Virus infection using MRI.

Researchers assessed fetal brain findings and volumetric composition with [magnetic resonance imaging](#) (MRI) of confirmed Zika virus infected fetuses from the recent outbreak in Barranquilla, Columbia. The fetuses were screened throughout gestation, finding brain anomalies at 29 weeks gestation.

"Up until our study, there have not been any reports focused on detailed brain imaging from the Zika outbreak in Colombia," stated Magdalena Sanz-Cortes, M.D., Ph.D. with Baylor College of Medicine's department of obstetrics and gynecology, maternal-fetal medicine specialist at Texas Children's Pavilion for Women and presenter of the study at the SMFM annual meeting. The researchers found a reduction in brain tissue and increased amount of fluid that was most pronounced in the upper brain. "Microcephaly does not happen in all Zika cases," Sanz-Cortes explained, referring to the small head size that has been characterized as a Zika symptom. The findings were similar to the findings of infected

babies in Brazil.

"This research has filled a gap of knowledge for us," Sanz-Cortes continued, "these results support the recent notion that we should not rely on microcephaly to determine if a fetus or newborn has contracted the Zika Virus."

More information: Abstract 73: Characterization of brain malformations and volume assessment in fetuses with zika virus infection using MRI, The Pregnancy Meeting, 2017.

Provided by Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine

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