

Anesthesia before age 3 not linked to intelligence deficits

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(HealthDay)—Multiple exposures to anesthesia before the age of 3 years

may have neuropsychological impacts, though intelligence does not appear to be affected, according to a study published online April 18 in *Anesthesiology*.

David O. Warner, M.D., from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and colleagues conducted [neuropsychological testing](#) in 997 children and adolescents who were previously unexposed (411 subjects), singly exposed (380 subjects), or multiply exposed (206 subjects) to anesthesia. Study participants underwent testing at ages 8 to 12 or 15 to 20 years.

The researchers found that [intelligence quotient](#) did not differ significantly according to exposure status. However, processing speed and fine motor abilities were decreased in multiply but not singly exposed children. In addition, the parents of multiply exposed children reported increased problems related to executive function, behavior, and reading.

"Anesthesia exposure before age 3 years was not associated with deficits in the primary outcome of general intelligence," the authors write.

"Although secondary outcomes must be interpreted cautiously, they suggest the hypothesis that multiple, but not single, exposures are associated with a pattern of changes in specific neuropsychological domains that is associated with behavioral and learning difficulties."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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