Child health concerns related to use of food additives

July 24 2018

(HealthDay)—Regulatory changes are needed to address child health

concerns related to the use of food additives, according to a policy statement published online July 23 in *Pediatrics*.

Leonardo Trasande, M.D., M.P.P., from New York University in New York City, and colleagues address emerging child health concerns related to colorings, flavorings, and chemicals added to food during processing and substances used in food contact materials.

The authors note that in the past two decades, concern regarding food additives has increased, partly because of studies documenting endocrine disruption and other adverse effects. Exposure to these chemicals is disproportionate among minority and low-income populations in some cases. For many food additives, regulation and oversight is inadequate because of several key problems in the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. Current requirements for something to be designated as "generally recognized as safe" are not sufficient to ensure the safety of food additives or to protect against conflict of interest. Critical weaknesses exist in the current regulatory system for food additives; data about the health effects of food additives on children are inadequate, although in general, children are more vulnerable to chemical exposures.

"Substantial improvements to the food additives regulatory system are urgently needed, including greatly strengthening or replacing the 'generally recognized as safe' determination process, updating the scientific foundation of the FDA's safety assessment program, retesting all previously approved chemicals, and labeling direct additives with limited or no toxicity data," the authors write.

More information: Policy Statement
Technical Report