# Prenatal valproate exposure linked to increased ADHD risk

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(HealthDay)—Use of the antiepileptic drug (AED) valproate during

pregnancy is associated with an increased risk for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) among offspring, according to a study published online Jan. 4 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Jakob Christensen, M.D., Ph.D., from Aarhus University Hospital in Denmark, and colleagues collected data from all live-born singleton children in Denmark (1997 through 2011; 913,302 children) and followed them through 2015. Data from the Danish National Prescription Registry provided information on prenatal exposure to AEDs. The authors determined ADHD diagnoses from the Danish National Prescription Registry or the Danish Psychiatric Central Research Register.

The researchers found that 580 children were exposed to valproate during pregnancy and 8.4 percent of them had ADHD versus 3.2 percent of the 912,722 unexposed children. The risk for ADHD was increased by 48 percent with prenatal valproate exposure versus no exposure. In unexposed children, the absolute 15-year risk for ADHD was 4.6 percent versus 11.0 percent in children who were exposed to valproate in pregnancy. No associations were seen between other AEDs and ADHD.

"The findings of this study corroborate that counseling is appropriate for the use of valproate in pregnancy and in women of childbearing potential," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

**More information:** Abstract/Full Text
Editorial

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