Lower birth weight may up risk for psychiatric disorders

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(HealthDay)—After adjustment for family-related factors and

gestational age, lower birth weight is associated with a small but significant increased risk for several psychiatric disorders, according to a study published online Feb. 6 in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Erik Pettersson, Ph.D., from the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, and colleagues analyzed data from 546,894 pairs of full siblings born between 1973 and 1998 and followed through 2013 to examine associations between fetal growth and psychiatric diagnoses.

The researchers found that nine outcomes were significantly associated with birth weight: depression (odds ratio [OR], 0.96), anxiety (OR, 0.94), posttraumatic stress disorder (OR, 0.91), bipolar disorder (OR, 0.94), alcohol abuse (OR, 0.89), drug use (OR, 0.83), violent crimes (OR, 0.85), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (OR, 0.88), and autism (OR, 0.95). However, within sibling pairs, only depression (OR, 0.95), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OR, 0.93), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (OR, 0.86), and autism (OR, 0.72) remained significantly associated with birth weight. A 1-kg increase in birth weight was associated with significantly reduced general and specific neurodevelopmental factors within sibling pairs.

"After controlling for familial factors and psychiatric comorbidity, fetal growth was most strongly associated with specific neurodevelopmental disorders," the authors write.

Two authors disclosed financial ties to pharmaceutical companies.

More information: Abstract/Full Text

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