

Antidepressants in pregnancy do not affect child neurodevelopment, study finds

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Antidepressant use in pregnancy is not associated with an increased risk

for neurodevelopmental disorders in children, according to a study published online Oct. 3 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

Elizabeth A. Suarez, M.P.H., Ph.D., from Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues examined the association between antidepressant use in [pregnancy](#) and neurodevelopmental outcomes in children using data from cohorts of publicly and privately insured pregnant individuals and their children. A total of 1.93 million pregnancies in the Medicaid Analytic eXtract and 1.25 million pregnancies in the IBM MarketScan Research Database were recorded. Children were followed from birth for a maximum of 14 years. Data were included for 145,702 antidepressant-exposed and 3,032,745 unexposed pregnancies.

The researchers found that the crude results suggested up to a doubling in the risk for neurodevelopmental outcomes in association with exposure to antidepressants; however, in fully adjusted analyses, no association was observed. Comparing antidepressant-exposed with unexposed siblings, the hazard ratios (95 percent confidence intervals) were 0.97 (0.88 to 1.06), 0.86 (0.60 to 1.23), 0.94 (0.81 to 1.08), 0.77 (0.42 to 1.39), 1.01 (0.88 to 1.16), 0.79 (0.54 to 1.17), 1.00 (0.45 to 2.22), and 0.95 (0.80 to 1.12) for any neurodevelopmental disorder, [autism spectrum disorder](#), attention-deficit/[hyperactivity disorder](#), specific learning disorders, developmental speech/language disorders, [developmental coordination disorder](#), intellectual disability, and behavioral disorders, respectively.

"Antidepressant exposure during pregnancy could be an important marker for early screening and intervention in children, with the goal of improving outcomes for [neurodevelopmental disorders](#)," the authors write.

More information: Elizabeth A. Suarez et al, Association of

Antidepressant Use During Pregnancy With Risk of Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Children, *JAMA Internal Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2022.4268](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2022.4268)

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the biopharmaceutical industry.

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