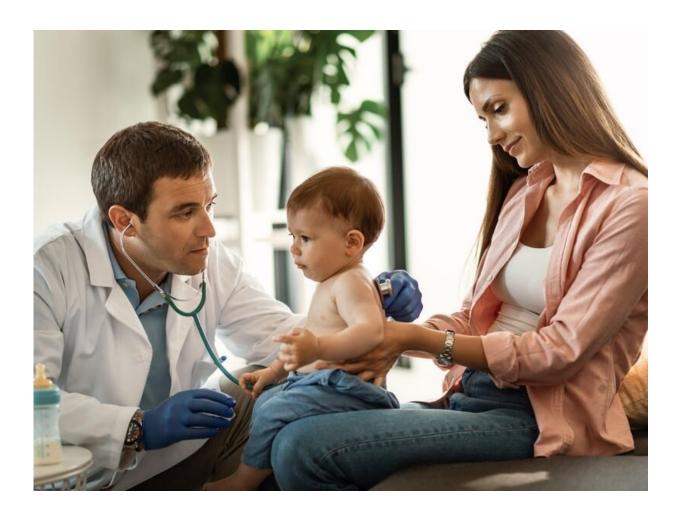


Pandemic babies may face communication impairment

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Infants born or being raised during the COVID-19 pandemic have



communication impairment compared with infants born before the pandemic, according to a systematic review and meta-analysis published online Oct. 28 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Kamran Hessami, M.D., from Boston Children's Hospital, and colleagues conducted a systematic literature review to identify studies evaluating associations of birth and being raised during the COVID-19 pandemic with the risk for neurodevelopmental impairment among infants.

Based on eight included studies (11,438 infants screened during the pandemic and 9,981 prepandemic [2015 to 2019]), the researchers found that neurodevelopmental impairment was present in 7 percent of infants screened during the COVID-19 pandemic. The prevalence of neurodevelopmental impairment among infants in the pandemic cohort with gestational exposure to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was 12 percent. Infants in the pandemic cohort were more likely to have communication impairment (odds ratio, 1.70), without significant differences in the domains of gross motor, fine motor, personal-social, and problem-solving compared with infants in the prepandemic cohort. Maternal SARS-CoV-2 infection was not associated with significant differences in any neurodevelopment domain in offspring, except for fine motor impairment (odds ratio, 3.46).

"These findings suggest that overall neurodevelopment was not changed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but birth or being raised during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, regardless of gestational exposure, was associated with a significant risk of communication impairment among the <u>infants</u>," the authors write.

More information: Kamran Hessami et al, COVID-19 Pandemic and Infant Neurodevelopmental Impairment, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.38941



Andréane Lavallée et al, Low Risk of Neurodevelopmental Impairment in the COVID-19 Generation Should Not Make Researchers Complacent, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.38958

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