

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 [infants](#)," 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](https://doi.org/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](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.38958)

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