Observational study of Zika virus infection during pregnancy begins in Brazil

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An observational study of pregnant women in Brazil to further understand Zika virus and its impact on reproductive health and fetus development have been launched. William Britt, M.D., professor of pediatric infectious diseases at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, leads the study, which complements his current research in Brazil on cytomegalovirus infection during pregnancy. CMV infection can lead to hearing and vision impairment in babies. Suresh Boppana, M.D., and Karen Fowler, M.D., professors in the UAB Department of Pediatrics, are co-investigators on this project.

"We are expanding the scope of our research to include studies of the outcomes of pregnancy in women with Zika virus, which in some cases parallels the outcomes of pregnancy in women with cytomegalovirus infection," Britt said. "These studies are part of a larger effort by the NIH to more fully define the natural history of Zika virus in pregnancy, including identifying laboratory and clinical characteristics of this infection associated with damage to the developing brain. The results of these studies will establish the foundation for interventions to limit the consequences of the virus infection in pregnant women."

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development-funded study looks to increase enrollment to approximately 200 pregnant women per month in Ribeirão Preto, in the state of São Paulo. The collaboration between UAB and Marissa Mussi-Pinhata, M.D., chief of the Department of Pediatrics of Ribeirão Preto Medical School at the University of São Paulo, follows pregnant women beginning in their first

trimester, regardless of their Zika virus infection status.

Samples of blood, urine, breast milk and amniotic fluids from the mother will be collected during and after pregnancy, as well as urine, saliva and cord blood from the newborn infants. Researchers will analyze the maternal and newborn samples for evidence of Zika virus infection, following infants suspected of having Zika from birth until age 2.

More information: For more information, see www.nichd.nih.gov/news/release … 1116-zika-study.aspx

Provided by University of Alabama at Birmingham

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