

Use of Antidepressants During Pregnancy May Alter Brain Development of Offspring, New Study Indicates

Women taking antidepressants who are, or are planning to become, pregnant can discuss these risks with their physicians.

WASHINGTON, DC, US, September 7, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new study indicates that expectant mothers' use of antidepressants during pregnancy may negatively [affect](#) the brain development of their children, adding to the medical literature that has linked selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressants during pregnancy to negative outcomes in offspring. SSRIs are the most frequently prescribed antidepressant for maternal depression.

Using brain imaging, researchers in the Netherlands measured the impact on the brain volume of 3,198 children whose mothers took SSRI antidepressants before or during pregnancy. The brain imaging was performed three times between the children's ages of 7 to 15 and was compared to brain imaging of a control group of children whose mothers did not take antidepressants.

The results, reported in JAMA Psychiatry, indicated that, "compared with nonexposed controls, children prenatally exposed to SSRIs had less cerebral gray matter...which persisted up to 15 years of age," the final age at which brain imaging was done in this study. Gray matter in the brain plays a significant role in mental functions, memory, emotions and movement. In the children exposed to SSRIs prenatally, negative effects were also observed in other brain tissues and brain structures the researchers had selected for examination. These effects did not last



Research indicates that SSRI antidepressants can hinder development of the offspring's brain in ways that negatively affect mental functions, memory, emotions and movement.

beyond early adolescence.

Previous research has linked SSRI antidepressants to many adverse effects during pregnancy and after birth.

SSRIs taken during the embryonic stage of development in pregnancy increases the risk of certain [birth defects](#). Expectant mothers using SSRIs incur an increased risk of [miscarriage](#), premature birth [1], and their newborns being admitted to a neonatal intensive care unit. [2]



Women taking antidepressants who are, or are planning to become, pregnant are encouraged to discuss these risks with their physicians.

Tapering and discontinuation of SSRIs before and during the early phase of pregnancy was advised by researchers who studied the withdrawal symptoms experienced by newborns. The symptoms of neonatal withdrawal syndrome include hypoglycemia, tremors, rapid breathing, and respiratory distress in newborns. [3]

“

Compared with nonexposed controls, children prenatally exposed to SSRIs had less cerebral gray matter...which persisted up to 15 years of age [the endpoint of the research].”

Dogukan Koc, M.D., Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands

SSRI-exposed infants were found to have more impaired neurological functioning over the month following birth than non-exposed infants, including significantly poorer quality of movement, more signs of central nervous system stress, and lower self-regulation. [4]

Taking SSRIs during pregnancy increases the risk of speech/language problems in offspring [5] and has been linked to developmental delays. [6]

More fundamentally, a landmark 2022 study questioned the prescribing of antidepressants at all, after finding the common reason for taking them – to correct a chemical imbalance in the brain – had no scientific basis. The study investigated whether evidence supported the theory that a low level of the brain chemical serotonin causes depression. [7]

“The serotonin theory of depression has been one of the most influential and extensively researched biological theories of the origins of depression,” the researchers wrote. “Our study shows that this view is not supported by scientific evidence. It also calls into question the basis for the use of antidepressants.”

Women taking antidepressants who are, or are planning to become, pregnant are encouraged to discuss these risks with their physicians.

WARNING: Anyone wishing to discontinue or change the dose of an antidepressant or other psychiatric drug is cautioned to do so only under the supervision of a physician because of potentially dangerous withdrawal symptoms.

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) continues to raise public awareness of the risks of serious side effects and withdrawal symptoms from antidepressants and other psychiatric drugs, so that consumers and their physicians can make fully informed decisions about starting or stopping the drugs.

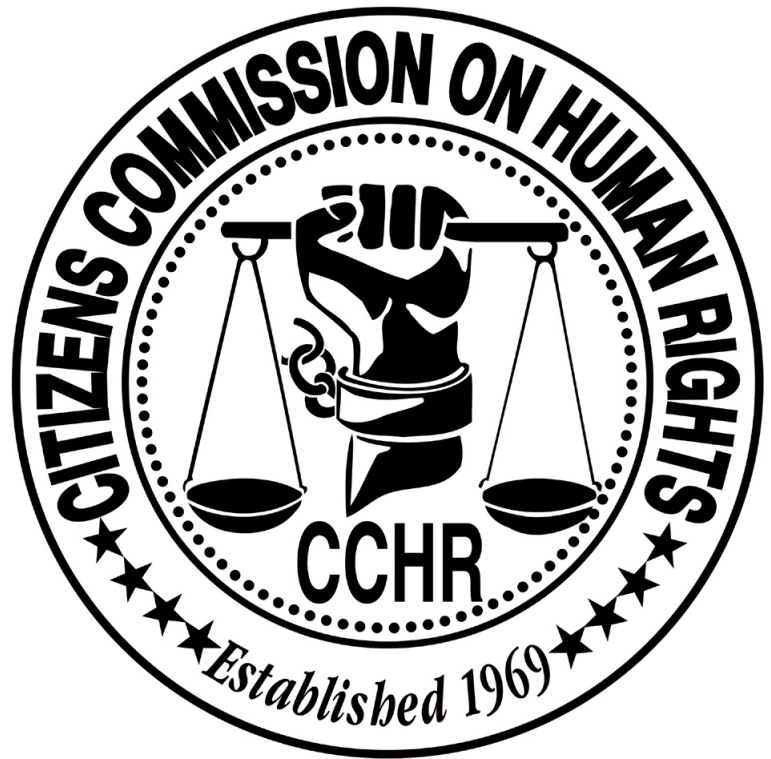
CCHR also recommends a complete physical examination with lab tests, nutritional and allergy screenings, and a review of all current medications to identify any physical causes of depression or other unwanted mental and behavioral symptoms, which might otherwise be misdiagnosed and incorrectly treated as a psychiatric disorder.

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights was co-founded in 1969 by members of the Church of Scientology and the late psychiatrist and humanitarian Thomas Szasz, M.D., recognized by many academics as modern psychiatry's most authoritative critic, to eradicate abuses and restore human rights and dignity to the field of mental health. CCHR has been instrumental in obtaining 228 laws against psychiatric abuse and violations of human rights worldwide.

The CCHR National Affairs Office in Washington, DC, has advocated for mental health rights and protections at the state and federal level. The CCHR traveling exhibit, which has toured hundreds



A landmark 2022 study found the common reason for taking antidepressants – to correct a chemical imbalance in the brain – had no scientific basis.



of major cities worldwide to educate people on the history to the present day of abusive and racist psychiatric practices, has been displayed at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, and at other locations.

[1] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24671232/>

[2] <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/4002/>

[3] <https://doi.org/10.1159/000516031>

[4] <https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.ajp.2015.14080989>

[5] <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/article-abstract/2566206>

[6] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24733881/>

[7] <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41380-022-01661-0>

Anne Goedeke

Citizens Commission on Human Rights, National Affairs Office

+1 202-349-9267

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/654243311>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.