Babies Born to Women on Antidepressants May Face Higher Risk of ADHD

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Pregnant mothers dealing with depression may have a difficult choice between treating their own mental health problems or putting their unborn children at possible risk of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). According to a new study published in the journal Molecular Psychiatry and reported by Agence France-Press, babies born to women who take antidepressants are statistically more likely to develop this condition during childhood.

ADHD is said to cause inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity, as well as social and learning problems in children. Estimates show that about 6.8 percent of all U.S. kids and teens are diagnosed with the disorder.

For the study, researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital looked at the medical records of 1,377 kids based in New England who were diagnosed with autism and 2,243 diagnosed with ADHD. Scientists compared these two groups of kids with those who didn't have the disorders; they also looked at the mothers' history of depression and use of antidepressants during pregnancy.

The results? When scientists established a mother's history of severe depression, the link between a mom taking antidepressants and her child being autistic disappeared. However, the link with ADHD remained intact.

Researchers warned, however, that the actual ADHD risk is low and may be explained through a statistical quirk.

Currently, the medical community hotly debates whether or not ADHD may result from a mix of genetic and environmental factors. Click here for more information.

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