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[New study released in February 2014 finds that Prenatal Acetaminophen Linked to Behavioral Problems in Kids](#)

Acetaminophen (paracetamol) is the most commonly used medication for pain and fever during pregnancy in many countries. ¹

Research data suggest that acetaminophen is a hormone disruptor, and abnormal hormonal exposures in pregnancy may influence fetal brain development.¹

Prenatal exposure to acetaminophen may raise the risk for behavioral problems in children, including attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and hyperkinetic disorder (HKD), a severe form of ADHD.²

Dr. Olsen and colleagues analyzed data on 64,322 children and their mothers enrolled in the Danish National Birth Cohort (1996 - 2002). Acetaminophen use during pregnancy was assessed during pregnancy and 6 months after childbirth.²

More than half of the women (56%) reporting using acetaminophen during pregnancy. Children with prenatal exposure to acetaminophen were at higher risk of being diagnosed with HKDs, using ADHD medications, or having ADHD-like behaviors.²

For all outcomes, stronger effects were seen among children exposed to acetaminophen during more than 1 trimester and among those exposed for a greater number of weeks.²

"Maternal hormones, such as sex hormones and thyroid hormones, play critical roles in regulating fetal brain development, and it is possible that acetaminophen may interrupt brain development by interfering with maternal hormones or via neurotoxicity such as the induction of oxidative stress that can cause neuronal death," the researchers write.²

In conclusion, maternal acetaminophen use during pregnancy is associated with a higher risk for HKDs and ADHD-like behaviors in children. Because the exposure and outcome are frequent, these results are of public health relevance but further investigations are needed.

Prepared by: Pharm.D : Eshraq Al-abweeny

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References:

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- 2- Prenatal Acetaminophen Linked to Behavioral Problems in Kids, February 24, 2014.
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