

Pesticides During Pregnancy Linked To Autism (again)

A large study looking into how pesticides affect developing fetuses and newborn babies finds that the most commonly used pesticides may result in a higher risk of autism spectrum disorder.

The study, published in the BMJ, was led by Ondine von Ehrenstein, associate professor in the Fielding School of Public Health at the University of California.

Researchers looked at the autism registry data and the pesticide use data in California. The study included 38,331 participants with 2,961 cases of autism.

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Eleven “high use” pesticides were selected for examination. Ehrenstein chose these pesticides because previous research with animals found developmental (including fetal) and neurological issues.

Researchers looked at agricultural areas where these pesticides were frequently used. They found that pregnant women who reside within a 2,000-meter radius of such agricultural areas were much more likely to have children with neurological issues.

Prenatal exposure to glyphosate increased odds of having a child with autism spectrum disorder with intellectual disabilities by 30%.

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Exposure to the common insecticides chlorpyrifos, diazinon, permethrin, methyl bromide, and myclobutanil within the first year of a child’s life increased the odds for autism with comorbid intellectual disability by up to 50%.

Findings suggest that an offspring's risk of autism spectrum disorder increases following prenatal exposure to ambient pesticides within 2000 m of their mother's residence during pregnancy, compared with offspring of women from the same agricultural region without such exposure. Infant exposure could further increase risks for autism spectrum disorder with comorbid intellectual disability.

BMJ

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This is the largest study but not the first one to show a link between autism and pesticides. The video below is from four years ago: