MotherToBaby Launches First Lupus in Pregnancy Study

World-Renowned UC San Diego Epidemiologist Leads Groundbreaking Study

SAN DIEGO, CA – Recruitment is underway for a groundbreaking new study on the treatment of lupus during pregnancy. The observational research, led by world-renowned UC San Diego epidemiologist Christina Chambers, PhD, MPH, is the first of its kind for the non-profit MotherToBaby, a CDC-recommended organization that provides evidence-based information on medications, diseases, vaccines, herbal supplements and more during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

The study will recruit 400 pregnant people over a five-year period to evaluate use of the lupus drug Benlysta® (belimumab) in pregnancy. Benlysta® is used to treat the most common type of lupus, systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), as well as lupus nephritis. Currently, there is limited information on the drug's use in pregnancy.

The study will be MotherToBaby's first to focus on a treatment specifically for lupus, and participants will be enrolled into the MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies research program. Chambers, who is the lead investigator for MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies, Co-Director of the Center for Better Beginnings, and Chief of the Environmental Science and Health Division in the UC San Diego Department of Pediatrics, noted that, "lupus can raise the risk of pregnancy complications, so it's important for both the mom and her developing baby that this condition be well-managed during pregnancy. So, when treatments for lupus like belimumab are available, we want to do our best to gather information about those pregnancies where this medication has been used."

The study is enrolling pregnant and recently pregnant people with exposure to Benlysta® and will provide critical information on the use of this medication during pregnancy. Participants will not be asked to change any part of their health care routine, including medications, nor will they be asked to travel.

More about MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies

MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies are conducted by the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS) and coordinated at the Center for Better Beginnings at UC San Diego. OTIS is a professional scientific society made up of individuals engaged in assessing and evaluating risks to pregnancy and breastfeeding from environmental exposures. Members include, but are not limited to, specialists in the fields of obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, genetics, dysmorphology, perinatal epidemiology, teratology, behavioral teratology, pharmacy, genetic counseling, nursing, midwifery, maternal and child health, public health, and include experts that provide MotherToBaby services and researchers that conduct MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies.

MotherToBaby is a suggested resource by many federal agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). MotherToBaby is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling $6,000,000 with zero percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents of this release are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government. To learn more about MotherToBaby and OTIS, please visit **MotherToBaby.org**.

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Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at MotherToBaby.org.

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Non-Profit's Expertise Recognized as Leading Resource on Exposures during Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

September 21, 2022

BRENTWOOD, TN – The non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS) through its public-facing service, MotherToBaby, are now contributors to the prestigious National Library of Medicine (NLM) where more than 250 of its bilingual (English/Spanish) evidence-based fact sheets can be found on medications, vaccines, diseases, herbal supplements, occupational exposures and more during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

MotherToBaby provides information on exposures before and during a pregnancy as well as breastfeeding traditionally through its no-cost helpline 866-626-6847, texting service 855-999-3525 and website www.MotherToBaby.org, where the public can live chat or e-mail an expert. "This is just one more way we can ensure pregnant people and healthcare providers can have access to reliable, up-to-date, research-based information so they can make better informed decisions during the child-bearing journey or in cases of adoption," said Christina Chambers, PhD, MPH, MotherToBaby Past President and UC San Diego professor of pediatrics. "Being a part of the NLM is a testament to the reliability of our resources. We are honored to be contributors."

For more than 200 years, “the National Library of Medicine has been a partner for biological discovery, clinical care decision-making and healthcare choices in everyday living,” according to its website. The NLM includes health information tools and biomedical literature, such as PubMed. The MotherToBaby Fact Sheets through the NLM can be accessed through public and hospital libraries as well as in schools and clinics. It’s also available at the following link: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK582980/

More about OTIS and MotherToBaby

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Adopted by the OTIS Board in June 2022

The Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS) opposes laws that prevent people from making informed reproductive choices, or that seek to prevent or criminalize healthcare professionals who inform patients of scientific knowledge or reproductive options. OTIS will continue to provide confidential, evidence-based, scientifically accurate and unbiased information about exposures before and during pregnancy that allows people who are pregnant or who could become pregnant to make informed reproductive choices.

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Adopted by the OTIS Board in March 2022

The Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS) stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and our friends and colleagues in Ukraine. We have proudly provided education and training on teratogens in Ukraine since 2003 and helped our Ukrainian colleagues to establish their own Teratology Information Service in 2017. We feel a

great kinship to the many people our various members have worked with over the years and it is greatly distressing for us to see the current events unfold.

As a professional organization comprised of leading healthcare professionals in the area of teratology, or birth defects, we hope for the safety and health of pregnant and breastfeeding individuals and their children as they deal with the difficult situation in Ukraine and neighboring countries. We are concerned about the increased risk of harmful pregnancy exposures related to warfare, the negative psychological impacts of conflict, the interruption of access to maternal healthcare, and the effects these conditions may have on generations to come. We hope a healthy future is restored immediately for all who are impacted.

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We hope you'll join MotherToBaby and partners around the world for an Instagram LIVE on Thursday, March 3rd at 10a PT/1pm ET for World Birth Defects Day. MotherToBaby experts will be answering questions about COVID-19 vaccines during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

You can participate by:

- Following @MotherToBaby on Instagram
- Tap the small badge around the story circles at the top of the screen that says "live" to enter the live stream at

10a PT/1p ET.

· Once you're in the livestream, you can ask a question and/or add a comment. Let us know you're there! World Birth Defects Day is an opportunity to spread the word about preventing birth defects and sharing resources. We hope to see you there on 3/3/2022!

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