Teratogen Experts Speak Out Against Misleading Study That Discourages Paracetamol Use in Pregnancy

Non-Profit Cites Potential Health Repercussions of Such Flawed Conclusions

December 15, 2021

BRENTWOOD, TN – The non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS) and its public-facing service, MotherToBaby, respond to "misleading" new review regarding maternal paracetamol (also known as acetaminophen) use. The widely studied drug is healthcare providers' recommended choice for the treatment of pain during pregnancy.

The response from the world's leading organization on exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding was drafted after a new review receiving widespread media attention that was published in ***Nature Reviews Endocrinology*** suggested pregnant women should not use paracetamol or products containing paracetamol at all. Sura Alwan, MSc, PhD, corresponding author of the organization's response said such a recommendation can have serious repercussions. "These studies suffer from serious methodological problems," explained Alwan. "Although the authors acknowledge the vast limitations of past studies on this subject, they do not consider the clinical consequences that will likely result from their premature precautionary statements. There are many examples in which undertreatment of maternal illnesses due to medication hesitancy poses a far greater risk to the fetus and mother than the exposure to the medication," she added.

More than 50 members of OTIS and its partner organizations, which consist of scientists, clinicians, epidemiologists, and teratology information specialists, signed on to support the response. To read it in its entirety, please visit https://www.nature.com/articles/s41574-021-00606-x

More about OTIS and MotherToBaby

The Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (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 includes 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). To learn more about MotherToBaby and OTIS, please visit www.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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ATLANTA, GA – In collaboration with the National Society of Genetic Counselors, MotherToBaby, a non-profit service of the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), is excited to offer a free webinar July 30, 2021 on prenatal exposures and their known effects on the development and behavior of children. Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits will be offered for genetic counselors. Advanced registration is required at the following link: https://bit.ly/prenatalexposures

WHO: Featured speaker Claire Coles, PhD, Director of MotherToBaby Georgia and Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Pediatrics at Emory University.

Dr. Coles is also Director of the Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development Laboratory at Emory. Her expertise is in the developmental and behavioral effects of prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol and the interaction of these effects with the postnatal environment. She was among the first to describe the behavioral effects of prenatal alcohol exposure and to investigate the effects of cocaine exposure on child development.

WHAT: “Challenges in Identifying Effects of Prenatal Exposure on Development and Behavior,” a free webinar in partnership with the National Society of Genetic Counselors. Advanced registration is required here.

WHEN: July 30, 2021, 9a PT/12p ET.

PURPOSE: This free webinar is designed for the scientist, genetic counselor and health care provider. Attendees will learn to:

- Define what a behavioral teratogen is and why it has an effect on child development.
- Be able to critique media reports and journal articles on effects of prenatal exposures.
- Identify what information is necessary for accurate information about development and behavior.
- Have information about referrals to address problems in development and behavior.

More about OTIS and MotherToBaby

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Asthma is a common medical condition affecting women of reproductive age, yet many of the medications used to treat it are not well-studied for their safety in pregnancy and lactation, leading many asthma sufferers to discontinue their medications when they are expecting or nursing. Since uncontrolled asthma can lead to poor outcomes for both mom and baby, national experts led by Dr. Christina Chambers, one of our MotherToBaby specialists based at the University of California San Diego and an investigator for the Vaccines and Medications in Pregnancy Surveillance System (VAMPSS), have come together to detail an action plan for filling the information gaps about asthma medication safety in pregnancy and lactation.

Published online this week in ***The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology***, the action plan describes the proceedings from a workshop conducted in November 2019 and supported by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute and the Office of Research on Women's Health in the Office of the Director of the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Office of Women's Health. The workshop assembled key stakeholders who were tasked with prioritizing, strategizing and mobilizing action steps on gaps in knowledge regarding asthma medication safety in pregnancy and lactation. The overarching goal of the workshop was to identify approaches that could be applied broadly to fill gaps in data about the safety of all medications and vaccines in pregnancy and lactation.

As a result of the workshop, a multi-stakeholder consortium on asthma medications in pregnancy and lactation has been developed. In order to address the evidence gaps and aid in populating medication labels with data that health providers can use to inform clinical decision making, the consortium developed a plan to systematically obtain necessary data in the most efficient and timely manner. The consortium also recommended the development of guidelines for the evaluation and management of asthma during pregnancy and lactation that adhere to the standards developed by the National Academy of Medicine, which would not only offer recommendations for patients, caregivers, and health providers at the point-of-care but also highlight specific evidence gaps that warrant further research.

According to Chambers, “the need for high quality information regarding medication and vaccine safety in pregnancy and lactation is great – implementation of the recommendations stemming from this workshop will be a major step forward in addressing this health disparity.”

In partnership with VAMPSS, MotherToBaby conducts observational pregnancy studies to evaluate the safety of medications used to treat asthma and other health conditions. MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies accept both healthcare provider referrals as well as patient self-referrals. To learn more, visit: MotherToBaby.org/Studies.

Read the Abstract

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Teratogen Experts Speak Out Against Misleading Study That Discourages Paracetamol Use in Pregnancy

World Birth Defects Day is March 3 and MotherToBaby is a proud partner in two of the events scheduled for that day – the Facebook Live Event at 1p ET about the COVID-19 vaccine in pregnancy and breastfeeding featuring our own Sonja Rasmussen, MD, Lorrie Harris-Sagaribay, MPH, Kirstie Perrotta, MPH and our Past President Robert Felix. In addition, a #WorldBDDay Twitter chat is scheduled and, alongside the non-profit Family Voices, our Al Romeo, RN, PhD, will present a free webinar on lead exposure at 2p ET. We hope you’ll mark your calendar for all of the events scheduled for March 3 and support World Birth Defects Day by taking part! Here is the full rundown of the activities outlined by our partners at the International Clearinghouse on Birth Defects Surveillance and Research:

LIVE EVENTS on March 3rd

Time	Event	How to Participate
8 AM EST / 2PM CET	**WHO WBDD webinar via Zoom:** Saving lives of babies with birth defects and improving their quality of life	1) Registration details will be made available soon.
11 AM EST/8 AM PST	**#WorldBDDay Twitter Chat:**Many birth defects. One voice	1) Promote event with sample tweets and promotional graphic-Eng, Span 2) Prepare responses and participate live or schedule tweets (script)
1PM EST/10AM PST	**Facebook Live Event: COVID-19 Vaccine in Pregnancy & Breastfeeding**	Follow MotherToBaby on March 3 to take part and ask questions! https://fb.me/e/A2mTOEya
2PM EST/11AM PST	**Free webinar on lead exposure in pregnancy**	Register at: http://bit.ly/FV_MTB_2021_Lead

Event Descriptions

WHO World Birth Defects Day Webinar via Zoom

8:00AM EST / 2:00PM CET

All children have the right to a healthy start in life. Babies born with birth defects are particularly at risk of death and lifelong disability. Many birth defects can be prevented and treated. But, when a baby is born with a birth defect, receiving the right care as soon as possible gives them the best chance to life and helps them reach their maximum potential. There is a need for strengthening healthcare services to meet the needs of babies born with a birth defect, in particular in low-and-middle income countries of Asia and Africa, where the health care systems are the weakest and the burden of birth defects is the highest. To promote quality of care and universal health coverage for children with birth defects, we must bring to light the human rights perspective and the need for advocacy.

With this webinar, we would like to commemorate World Birth Defects Day to raise awareness about **#ManyBirthdefects1Voice**. Registration details will be shared soon.

#WORLDBDDAY Global Twitter Chat

On March 3rd at 11:00AM EST, 5:00PM CET, join us during the Twitter Chat as one voice to raise awareness about birth defects. To prepare, get the bilingual script and questions here. Even if you cannot join us live, please schedule a tweet using #WorldBDDay at this time.

Facebook Live Event: COVID-19 Vaccine in Pregnancy & Breastfeeding

The event panel includes moderator Robert Felix, MD; and speakers Sonja Rasmussen, MD, Lorrie Harris-Sagaribay, MPH, and Kirstie Perrotta, MPH.

Follow MotherToBaby at https://fb.me/e/A2mTOEya

Lead Exposure Webinar

As parents or when planning to start a family, it's important to know and understand how to achieve the best care and health for children, but where do you begin? Right at home! Houses, especially older ones, can be a source of lead exposure. Although lead-based paint hasn't been sold since the late 70s, many older homes still have it. Learn about the available resources supporting families who are exposed to lead. On World Birth Defects Day March 3, join the free webinar presented by MotherToBaby and Family Voices on the impact of lead exposures during pregnancy, infancy and in childhood. Register here now.

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

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With the launch of our new, mobile-friendly website in October 2020, we have decided to retire or "sunset" the MotherToBaby App for both iOS and Android. By February 28, 2021, the MotherToBaby App will no longer be available for download from Apple's App Store or from the Google Play Store.

If you are a current MotherToBaby App User:

The app is no longer being supported or updated, so we highly recommend deleting it from all of your devices.

How Do I Prepare for the Change?

Bookmark our website, MotherToBaby.org, and add it to the home screen on your mobile device now! Everything you previously accessed on the app is now available on our mobile-friendly website.

Explore Our Website

Here are some quick links to our most popular content, which had previously been accessible from our app:

Fact Sheets: Access our library of fact sheets on 250+ exposures and how they may impact pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Pregnancy Studies: Get information on our observational pregnancy studies and forms that pregnant women can use to join a study or healthcare providers can use to refer patients to our studies.

Ask An Expert an Exposure Question: Reach out to a MotherToBaby specialist by phone, text, email, or chat to ask questions about an exposure during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Refer A Patient to our Information Service and/or Pregnancy Studies: Healthcare providers can use this form to refer their patients either to our pregnancy studies or one of our specialists for pregnancy/lactation exposure information.

Baby Blog: Access our library of blogs, which cover a wide variety of pregnancy and breastfeeding exposure topics

written by our experts specifically for moms and moms-to-be.

Podcast: Tune in for lively discussions about managing exposure risks and staying healthy with our podcast host and MotherToBaby information specialist Chris Stallman.

Our Website Offers Enhanced Mobile Experiences

Our new website also provides overview pages for pregnant women with hand-selected resources on select exposure topics and offers healthcare providers custom-curated information that is specific to their field of practice. This means that all of our website users can now find relevant information while on-the-go!

The responsive design provide a seamless experience for website users to interact with our services and navigate our resources. We've also created an interactive map of MotherToBaby's coverage to encourage users to find their local affiliate and connect with the team that is working to reduce the chance of preventable birth defects in our communities.

If you have any questions or would like help with information, please contact us at 866.626.6847 or click the Live Chat window in the bottom corner of your screen.

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