Fetal programming of mental health by acetaminophen? Response to the SMFM Statement: Prenatal Acetaminophen Use and ADHD.

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION:
A number of studies indicate that acetaminophen taken during pregnancy may have a programming effect on the fetal brain development. The potential adverse consequences may only surface to clinical detection years later. Should we act on these findings now or do we wait for additional evidence?

Areas covered:
We argue for action inspired by these well analyzed studies that are based on five prospective cohorts data collected from different countries. Several analytical options have been employed especially to address confounding, and all analyses have consistently suggested that confounding alone is an unlikely explanation for this disturbing observation.

Expert Opinion:
Acetaminophen is often used for minor symptom or discomfort where the treatment has no strong indication and carries little, if any risk for the pregnant women. The harm of doing nothing may well exceed the harm for taking precautionary actions considering the consequences at stake.