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FAS Not the Only Risk of Drinking While Pregnant

July 25, 2007

Research Summary

Not every child exposed to alcohol develops fetal alcohol syndrome, but researchers say prenatal drinking can lead to a variety of other behavioral problems among children, [HealthDay News](#) reported July 24.

Many alcohol-exposed children don't develop the facial characteristics associated with FAS but still suffer from a variety of cognitive and behavioral problems related to maternal drinking during pregnancy, according to researchers from San Diego State University. The problems are linked to damage to the the frontal-striatal areas of the brain, related to behavioral inhibition, said researchers who examined 22 8-to-18-year-olds with and without histories of heavy prenatal alcohol exposure.

"We found two regions within the prefrontal cortex where the youth with alcohol-exposure histories had increased brain activation and one area in the subcortex (called the caudate nucleus) where the alcohol-exposed youth had decreased brain activation," said study co-author Susanna L. Fryer. "Prenatal alcohol exposure can cause damage to the brain that results in significant problems with regulating behavior and optimal thinking and learning."

The study appears in the August 2007 issue of [Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research](#).

Reference:

Fryer, S.L., et al. (2007) Prenatal Alcohol Exposure Affects Frontal-Striatal BOLD Response During Inhibitory Control. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 31(8): 1415-1424; doi: 10.1111/j.1530-0277.2007.00443.x.

This article summarizes a mainstream media report of research published in a scientific journal. It is not an original analysis of the source material, which is cited in the reference above.

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