

Prenatal Exposure to SSRIs **Increases Chance of Cerebellar Herniation**

Antidepressant medications, also known as Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), are prescribed to as many 10% of pregnant women. A long-term study – not specific to Chiari - on the effects of prenatal exposure to these drugs on the health of the children found an increased risk of cerebellar herniation of 5mm or more. Specifically, children between 1-2 years old who were exposed to the SSRI's had an 18% rate of tonsillar herniation versus 2% for a matched control group. It is important to point out that these children were not being evaluated for symptoms but were given MRIs as part of the larger study. Although the numbers in this study were small, and it is not clear if the children will ever develop symptoms, it dramatically illustrates the role environmental factors may have on the anatomical development associated with Chiari.

SOURCE: *Rate of Chiari I malformation in children of mothers with depression with and without prenatal SSRI exposure. Knickmeyer RC, Meltzer-Brody S, Woolson S, Hamer RM, Smith JK, Lury K, Gilmore JH.*

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