Today’s piece was prepared by Janetta Lorenza Arellano, MS4, based on an article in TIME, [Does Taking Antidepressants During Pregnancy Cause Autism?](http://time.com/4743467/antidepressants-pregnancy-autism/)

This article discusses recent *JAMA* and *JAMA Pediatrics* publications that provide further reassurance to families regarding to the risk of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) due to prenatal antidepressant exposure. Previous studies have had mixed results regarding the association of prenatal antidepressant exposure and the increase risk for ASD. In the up-to-date *JAMA* articles, it was found that genes linked to mental health disorders may be more strongly associated with ASD than the exposure to antidepressants. One study’s sample size of greater than 1.5 million children examined mothers who reported prenatal antidepressant use, which compared in one analysis siblings who were born after prenatal antidepressant exposure to those who were born without prenatal exposure to antidepressants, and found to have similar rates of ASD among siblings. Another study’s co-author stated that “very few [studies] accounted for the severity of maternal depression, and very few accounted for other medication exposures.” Both studies agreed that rates of ASD are higher in prenatal antidepressant exposure; however, other factors must be taken in account. The paper in *JAMA Pediatrics* found similar findings in that previous studies offered inconsistent risk factors of ASD.

The TIME article discusses the research findings thoroughly and clearly. The author summarized the articles effectively for the reader to understand by ending with a quote from one of the co-authors, “These data should be reassuring that the likelihood autism is related to taking antidepressants is pretty low.” The journalist did not state the limitations of the studies but did state that further knowledge of the other factors mentioned in the articles may help explain what role prenatal antidepressant exposure may or may play in ASD.

**RESOURCES ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH:**

[National Institute of Mental Health – Autism](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd/index.shtml) *NIH website general autism info and guidelines*

[Research Autism](http://www.researchautism.net/autism) *British organization of evidence-based research on autism interventions*

[Women's Mental Health](https://womensmentalhealth.org/?doing_wp_cron=1493159169.1066329479217529296875) *Massachusetts General Hospital site (pregnancy, post--partum, etc.)*

[Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)](http://www.amchp.org/pages/default.aspx) *Info on 'Title V' & resources*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!