Today’s piece was prepared by Julie Lerman, MS-4, based on a NY Times story Treating Pregnant Women for Depression May Benefit Baby, Too

<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/04/26/treating-pregnant-women-for-depression-may-benefit-baby-too/?_r=0>

This article discusses a recent study in Obstetrics and Gynecology wherein, using a data set of over 7000 pregnant women, depressive symptoms were associated with increased risk of having preterm birth and SGA infants. The study authors also found that in women on antidepressants, there was no increased risk of prematurity or SGA; however, this data set was considerably smaller, which the article points out. This article makes the point that addressing maternal depression during pregnancy could be beneficial for the infant, and it is easy to come away from this article with a sense that antidepressants enact positive changes for infants.

Certainly prematurity/SGA can be dangerous and can portend later-in-life health problems, but this is only one piece of a complicated story. Antidepressant use in pregnancy is controversial, and there is debate as to whether it confers an increased risk of autism (currently this appears less likely.) Just two days after this article was published, though, a study demonstrated that kids with prenatal antidepressant exposure had a higher incidence of depression compared with those kids with prenatal exposure to maternal psychiatric illness but no antidepressants. This study seems to suggest that the antidepressants, not the depression, lead to psychiatric problems for kids. Looking at different outcomes produces contradictory views on what is “beneficial” for the child.

The question remains whether prenatal antidepressant use is harmful, helpful, or a combination of both. Most OBGYNs prefer to weigh the risks and benefits on a case-by-case basis. ACOG guidelines are available to help guide prenatal treatment, but for parents looking retrospectively for answers, the data is far murkier than this New York Times article suggests.

**RESOURCES ON ANTIDEPRESSANT USE DURING PREGNANCY:**

ACOG guidelines about antidepressants in pregnancy <http://www.acog.org/About-ACOG/News-Room/News-Releases/2009/Depression-During-Pregnancy>

Mayo Clinic’s discussion of safety, geared at patients

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/in-depth/antidepressants/art-20046420>

Science Daily article about depression relationship with prenatal antidepressant exposure, discussed above

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/04/160428094721.htm>

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