Today’s piece is prepared by Dane Mejias, MD, based on a CNN article, in its health section, titled “Autism linked to induced or augmented labor**”**

This article is based on a JAMA Pediatrics retrospective cohort study

<http://thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2013/08/12/autism-linked-to-induced-or-augmented-labor-study-says/>

using data collected from a North Carolina detailed birth record system (which includes diagnoses, parity, age, maternal educational level, mode and events during delivery) and an educational database that records special needs based on a prior diagnosis of autism as well as a standardized test administered by a school psychologist. The large sample size of 678,078 matched records from these two databases.

Controlling for the factors above, the study found augmented/induced labor is an independent risk factor for developing autism, with an odds ratio of 1.27 for patients whose labor was both induced and augmented.

The CNN article‘s subsections- Background, Methods, Results and Implications mirror objective scientific literary format and accurately states explicitly at the article’s beginning and end that the studies do NOT show that augmentation *causes* autism, instead finding an association only. The CNN article also lists confounders not accounted for, like paternal age or comorbidities, prior maternal medical conditions, medications taken during pregnancy etc. It also says, rightfully so, that further trials should be done to test these confounders, and that a prospective trial would yield more information.

However, a lay reader may equate “autism *linked* to induced or augmented labor” with “autism *causes* this condition.” Indeed, many comments from parents who ruminate the origins of their child’s autism latch onto labor induction and/or augmentation as a causative factor. The article’s title will likely entice readers but may also misleadingly color readers’ perceptions of the issue before reading. **AUTISM**

**RESOURCES FOR PARENTS:**

* Centers for Disease Control & Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>
*Autism Information*
* Autism Science Foundation <http://www.autismsciencefoundation.org/>
*A nonprofit organized for charitable and educational purposes, supporting autism research by providing funding and other assistance to scientists and organizations conducting, facilitating, publicizing and disseminating autism research. The organization also provides information about autism to the general public and serves to increase awareness of autism spectrum disorders and the needs of individuals and families affected by autism.*

**JAMA Citation:**

Gregory S. et al:. *Association of Autism with Induced or Augmented Childbirth in North Caroline Birth Record (1990-1998) and Education Research (1997-2007) Databases*.JAMA Pediatr. 2013; 167(10):959-966 <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1725449>

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