

MEDIA RELEASE

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PAGB response to Pregnancy and Paracetamol Study

Research, published in the International Journal of Epidemiology, has suggested that using paracetamol during pregnancy may be associated with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum conditions (ASC) in infants. This Spanish birth cohort study included 2644 mother and child pairs recruited during pregnancy.

John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive, comments: “The NHS advice on paracetamol is that it can be used through all stages of pregnancy, and given to children from two months old, to reduce a high temperature (fever) and relieve pain. This is supported by a large body of evidence from over 50 years of paracetamol use in humans.

“These preliminary results should not concern pregnant women, these conditions are extremely complex and authors conclude that further studies are needed. It is also important to note that the findings of this study are from an observational, rather than a randomised controlled study, with the results based on answers to questionnaires completed at various intervals over a long period of time. The limitations of this type of study are well known and the authors acknowledge that their work does not account for the amount of paracetamol taken, therefore, it is impossible to understand whether the paracetamol was taken within guideline levels.”

“We would recommend pregnant women and those with young infants should always speak to their pharmacist, midwife or GP before taking any medicine, including paracetamol. It’s also important that pregnant women use paracetamol at the lowest effective dose for the shortest possible time.”

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Notes to editors:

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

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