



CME

## SSRI Use During Pregnancy and Autism: Is It a Real Threat?

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Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are thought to be a result of numerous nonmodifiable risk factors, including advanced parental age, gestational diabetes, birth order, low birth weight, and hypoxia. Recent clinical findings related to the hyperserotonergic theory of ASDs have prompted debate regarding the developmental relationship between maternal selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) use and the manifestation of ASDs in their children, as it may be a potentially controllable prenatal risk factor. This article examines the recent studies that attempt to explore the link between SSRIs and ASDs for the purpose of clinical decision-making. In many studies, SSRIs were associated with possible neurodevelopmental delay and a small but statistically significant link to ASDs after controlling for other risk factors, but no conclusive evidence has been seen in any study. Ultimately, ASDs are the result of interacting genetic and environmental variables, of which SSRIs potentially remain one modifiable contributor, although further research is required to understand their association more thoroughly.

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