Maternal Marijuana Use and Childhood Outcomes

Between four and five percent of pregnant women report some level of cannabis use. This level decreases markedly throughout pregnancy. Many women who report using cannabis during pregnancy do so to address symptoms of nausea/morning sickness.


In utero cannabis exposure is not independently associated with low birthweight, pre-term birth, or other adverse neonatal outcomes

"[O]verall prevalence of marijuana use during pregnancy was low. ... [M]arijuana use during pregnancy was not independently associated with infant birth weight or gestational age, after controlling for confounding. ... Further, we did not observe significant effects of marijuana use during pregnancy and preterm birth or healthcare utilization."
Marijuana use during and after pregnancy and association of prenatal use on birth outcomes: A population-based study, Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 2018

"[M]aternal marijuana use during pregnancy is not an independent risk factor for low birth weight or preterm delivery after adjusting for factors such as tobacco use. There also does not appear to be an increased risk for other adverse neonatal outcomes such as SGA (small for gestational age) and placental abruption once we account for other influencing factors. … [T]he results of this systematic review and meta-analysis suggest that the increased risk for adverse neonatal outcomes reported in women using marijuana in pregnancy is likely the result of coexisting use of tobacco and other cofounding factors and not attributable to marijuana use itself."
Maternal marijuana use and adverse neonatal outcomes: A systematic review and meta-analysis, Obstetrics and Gynecology, 2016

In utero cannabis exposure is not independently associated with significant, consistent adverse effects on childhood development


"The evidence base for maternal-infant health outcomes of cannabis use in pregnancy is more robust than for many other substances. … Although there is a theoretical potential for cannabis to interfere with neurodevelopment, human data drawn from four prospective cohorts have not identified any long-term or long lasting meaningful differences between children exposed in utero to cannabis and those not."
Cannabis and pregnancy: Maternal child health implications during a period of drug policy liberalization, Preventive Medicine, 2017
"Neither maternal nor paternal cannabis use was associated with educational attainment (in their children) in observational analyses, but few mothers in our sample used cannabis regularly in pregnancy."

The effect of in utero exposure to alcohol, tobacco and cannabis on educational attainment in adolescence: findings from ALSPAC, a UK cohort study, Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, 2017