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## Drinking Alcohol During Pregnancy Could Lead to Acute Myeloid Leukemia in Children

*Although Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) is relatively rare in children, drinking alcohol during pregnancy could increase the risk, according to a recent paper published in Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research.*

Julie Ross, Ph.D., Director of the Division of Pediatric Epidemiology and Clinical Research at the University of Minnesota, said there are about 700 cases of AML in the United States in children each year.

"It's quite rare, so we want to be careful about worrying parents too much," said Ross, who was not involved in the study, but is an editorial board member of Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention.

Ross and the lead researcher of this study, Paule Latino-Martel, Ph.D., Research Director at the Research Center for Human Nutrition in France, agreed that these findings should strengthen the public health recommendation against alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

"Despite the current recommendation that pregnant women

should not drink alcohol during pregnancy, alcohol consumption during pregnancy is 12 percent in the United States, 30 percent in Sweden, 52 percent in France, 59 percent in Australia and 60 percent in Russia," said Latino-Martel.

Latino-Martel and colleagues analyzed 21 case control studies. Alcohol intake during pregnancy, defined as a response to a yes or no question, was associated with a 56 percent increased risk of AML in children. The risk of AML was higher in children aged 0 to 4 years old at diagnosis. There was no significant association with acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

Source: Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention, 2010; 19: 1238-1260 DOI: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-09-1110.