

Mothers who smoke during pregnancy are more likely to have children with 'bad behaviour or ADHD'

- **The risk of antisocial behaviour rose among children whose mothers smoked**
- **They were more likely to have poor attention spans and show disruptive behaviour**

By Jenny Hope Medical Corrospendent

Children are more likely to be unruly and badly behaved if their mothers smoked in pregnancy, claim researchers. The risk of antisocial behaviour rose among children whose mothers smoked.

They were more likely to have poor attention spans and show disruptive behaviour such as ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).

An analysis of three existing studies from New Zealand, the U.S. and Cardiff analysed rates of conduct problems between the ages of four and 10 years.

Children are more likely to be unruly and badly behaved if their mothers smoked in pregnancy, claim researchers

Such problems include bad behaviour and attention difficulties.

The study published in the medical journal JAMA Psychiatry found a link between maternal smoking and conduct disorders that rose with the amount of cigarettes smoked.

Lead researcher Gordon Harold of Leicester University, said: 'The increase is relative to the frequency of smoking.'

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Dr Theodore Slotkin, of Duke University Medical Center, North Carolina, in a linked editorial in the journal, added: 'The conclusion is incontrovertible: prenatal tobacco smoke exposure contributes significantly to subsequent conduct disorder in offspring.'

'We now know that the consequences of prenatal tobacco exposure are not restricted to perinatal risk, but rather extend to the lifespan and affect the quality of life for countless individuals.'

Previous U.S. research has suggested that later behavioural problems in children may be linked to drinking during pregnancy.

Earlier this week research revealed that nicotine addict mothers and fathers cut back on Christmas presents for their children, buy them less clothing and even feed them less to fund their daily cigarette habit.



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The poll, which examined the lifestyle behaviour of smokers, also discovered that some people stole from friends, applied for credit cards and even asked strangers on the street for money when desperate for their fix.

The research was carried out by pharmaceutical company Pfizer as part of their Don't Go Cold Turkey Campaign and asked 6,271 smokers about how they funded smoking in tougher economic times. It revealed that while 60 per cent of smokers refused to pay more than £8 for a packet of cigarettes, one per cent - which equated to 31 people - were willing to pay an astonishing £40. The most alarming statistics related to smoking parents however. It found that many were often more willing to reduce their child's quality of life than go without cigarettes. A shocking 20 per cent admitted to having bought their children fewer or cheaper clothes and shoes to save money instead of quitting