

CMV birth defects may be prevented by drug typically used to treat anxiety

An anxiety drug could prevent a common virus from causing birth defects and deafness, a study in newborn mice suggests.

Roughly four in every 1000 babies are infected with [cytomegalovirus \(CMV\)](#), which can cause seizures and intellectual disability, as well as Zika-like symptoms including microcephaly. It can also cause deafness. The virus is usually passed to infants during pregnancy. While some babies are born with clear signs of infection, some don't go on to develop symptoms until later on.

Valnoctamide, an anxiety drug available in France and Italy, seems to reduce CMV levels in infected mice, but it hasn't been clear if it would have a similar effect on the brain, [where CMV causes the most damage](#).

...

When they were assessed at adolescence, the valnoctamide-treated mice also showed none of the abnormal social responses and impaired movement seen in the control mice infected with CMV. Further experiments in human brain cells called astrocytes, which are targeted by CMV, revealed a 100-fold decrease in the amount of virus present when they were treated with valnoctamide.

...

"It would be fantastically useful to have a drug that could be given to women in pregnancy, or to young infants, and which had fewer side effects," says [Hermione Lyall](#), a pediatrician at Imperial College London.

[Read the full study [here](#)]

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Anxiety drug may prevent common virus that causes birth defects](#)