

Early immune system exposures linked to chronic disease

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Scientists and regulators have a golden opportunity to reduce the health toll from a range of diseases by focusing more attention on identification of environmental factors that can damage the prenatal immune system as well as that of infants and children, according to an article scheduled for the Jan. 19 issue of *ACS' Chemical Research in Toxicology*.

In the study, Rodney R. Dietert points out that a scientific field known as developmental immunotoxicology (DIT) focuses on the effects of exposure to biological materials, drugs, medical devices, chemicals, and other environmental factors on the developing immune system in fetuses, infants and children. Research so far suggests links between those factors and an increased risk of asthma, autism, diabetes, leukemia, and other important diseases.

Dietert's perspective article examines diseases associated with DIT and calls for an increase in awareness of preadult immune dysfunction and its consequences on life-long chronic disease. A protected, well functioning immune system, the paper says, could not only extend quality of life during adulthood, it could also reduce future health care needs. Identifying hazards for developing immune systems and protection against dysfunction provide opportunities to reduce health risks for the most significant chronic diseases of children and adults, Dietert says.

Article: "Developmental Immunotoxicology: Focus on Health Risks"
pubs.acs.org/stoken/presspac/p...ll/10.1021/tx800198m

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