

# Phthalates: Chauvinist Pigs?

*By ACSH Staff — June 9, 2009*

A new study posted on the Environmental Health News website is being used to make the case that prenatal phthalate exposure decreases the alertness of newborn girls while increasing it in newborn boys.

The analysis used here is bizarre, says ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross. At the root of it is the meaningless notion of an endocrine disruptor, which is invoked to explain inconclusive results on alertness based solely on the fact that boys and girls have different hormone levels. They didn't mention which of several phthalates had an effect on any specific hormones, which isn't surprising since no gender-specific hormones have anything to do with alertness.

Dr. Ross doubts that this will cause much of a stir among legitimate medical researchers: If this rationale was presented in a medical context, as opposed to an environmental one, it would be dismissed as nonsense. What we have here is the epitome of junk science in the service of a particular anti-chemical agenda. Unfortunately, as we have come to expect, this ridiculous 'study' will now be quoted back and forth among the environmentalist coterie as though it somehow proves that phthalates are evil no matter how inane the evidence in support.

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