

AGRICULTURE

# Certain pesticides linked to attention problems in kids: study

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Children exposed to organophosphate pesticides while still in the womb are more likely to exhibit attention and behavioural problems by kindergarten age, researchers suggest.

In a study conducted at the University of California at Berkeley, scientists found that prenatal exposure to organophosphate pesticides was significantly linked to attention problems at age five, with the effects showing up more often among boys.

The study is one among several papers in recent years raising concerns that the chemicals used to kill insects on crops and in indoor environments could be having deleterious effects on the developing brains of children.

Organophosphate pesticides work by disrupting neurotransmitters, particularly acetylcholine, which plays an important role in sustaining attention and short-term memory.

In June, a Harvard University study reported that higher exposure to the pesticides in school-aged children was linked with increased rates of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder symptoms.

"These studies provide a growing body of evidence that organophosphate pesticide exposure can impact human neurodevelopment, particularly among children," said

