PREFACE

ESTABLISHING A NEW BENCHMARK FOR DRUG EVALUATION DURING PREGNANCY

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TREATING THE MOTHER, PROTECTING THE UNBORN*

The vast majority of pregnant women use medications either before recognizing they have conceived or later. Yet, very few of these medications have been studied adequately in pregnancy and have been labeled by regulatory agencies for such use. This reality means that very large numbers of women and their unborn babies are at risk of inappropriate and potentially damaging drug therapy.

Because of understandable ethical issues of exposing the fetus to drugs, coupled with harsh litigious climate, very few new molecules are tested in pregnancy by drug manufacturers.

The Motherisk Program at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and The Ivey Chair in Molecular Toxicology at the University of Western Ontario are dedicated to improving rationale drug therapy during pregnancy and lactation. The present symposium aimed at filling a gap in the scientific discussion of safe and effective drugs during pregnancy and lactation. The primary objective of this task is to strike a new balance between effective maternal therapy and fetal safety.

The following articles deal with a variety of aspects of the issue, from the clinical and toxicological to the regulatory, from first trimester teratological effects to late pregnancy pharmacotherapy of labour.

It is hoped that this Symposium will help to empower the formation of new avenues to study drugs during pregnancy and lactation as well as establish a new benchmark for drug evaluation during pregnancy.

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