

May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## **SOGC Position Statement: Marijuana Use during Pregnancy**

Cannabis (*marijuana*) is the most commonly used illicit drug among pregnant women. Legalization of cannabis in Canada may reinforce the reputation of cannabis being a harmless drug and result in an increase of use among pregnant women.

Evidence-based data has shown that cannabis use during pregnancy can adversely affect the growth and development of the baby, and lead to long-term learning and behavioural consequences. There have been sufficient studies with comparable results, showing that cannabis use during pregnancy raises concerns of impaired neurodevelopment of the fetus, in addition to the adverse health consequences related to maternal and fetal exposure to the effects of smoking. Pregnancy is a critical time for the brain development of the baby and the adverse effects caused by cannabis exposure can be life-long.

**The SOGC recommends that women who are pregnant or contemplating pregnancy should abstain from cannabis use during pregnancy.**

The SOGC also recommends that:

- Health professionals discuss the potential adverse health effects of cannabis use during pregnancy with patients who are pregnant or contemplating pregnancy.
- Women who are pregnant or contemplating pregnancy be encouraged to discontinue cannabis use.
- Use of cannabis for medicinal purposes be strongly discouraged during pregnancy, in favor of alternative therapies that have proven to be safe during pregnancy.
- Women be encouraged to abstain from cannabis use during lactation and breastfeeding.
- Further research be undertaken on the effects of cannabis on pregnancy and lactation.
- Public education be funded and made widely available to ensure that those who are pregnant or contemplating pregnancy are aware of the risks posed by cannabis.