New Genetic Screening Tools Could Lead to Unnecessary Abortions

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Pregnant or planning to have a baby? Lately, there's been a lot of hype about a new generation of prenatal screening tests that can track down genetic illnesses, such as Down or Edwards syndromes, before a baby is born. But a report by the New England Center for Investigative Reporting warns: Don't believe the hype. The new screening tools aren't actually very accurate and could even lead to unnecessary abortions, the Boston Globe reports.

The new report showed that these new before-birth tests can actually yield false results a whopping 50 percent, or more, of the time. Doctors also warned that device manufacturers are failing to clearly underline the difference between simply detecting a potential genetic problem and actually diagnosing a life-threatening condition. Here's the deal: These new tools only detect possible genetic problems.

"The worry is women are terminating without really knowing if [the initial test result] is true or not," said Athena Cherry, PhD, a professor of pathology at the Stanford University School of Medicine.

In addition, the report also highlighted a growing number of cases (and lawsuits) brought by women who gave birth to babies with a genetic condition after they received healthy screening results.

Doctors are now looking for more ways to reduce the error and stress these genetic tests create. They also want to deliver more accurate information to pregnant women about how these tests work.

Did you know that male fetuses are more vulnerable to genetic and environmental stressors than girls? Click here for more information.

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http://beta.docker.tusaludmag.com/article/prenatal-genetic-tests-faulty-26591-3693