ScrAPES: Friday, September 19th, 2014

Fracking Linked to Higher Rates of Birth Defects

 Two un-peer-reviewed studies have supposedly linked the rate of birth defects with the mother’s proximity to fracking sites. These studies have discovered an increased risk of heart disease in newborns born to mothers living near fracking sites in Colorado, still births in Utah, and low birth-weights in Pennsylvania. Mothers living with at least 125 wells within a mile had a 30% chance of birthing babies with congenial heart disease. The 59 cases used for the Colorado study are not enough to provide the study with adequate data, however, the data may be sufficient enough to spark inquiry with regard to the environmental hazards of hydraulic extraction. Whether these studies will prove effective in shaping policy remains to be determined.

 I chose this topic because I find the subject of fracking interesting and I’m particularly interested in the health effects of the chemicals used to frack. Many of these untested chemicals could lead to not only serious birth defects but also to increased risks of cancer. If these chemicals made their way in small amounts in the petroleum that they produce with fracking, the adverse environmental effects would be catastrophic and unpredictable.

 Now I would research every chemical used in fracking and the surveys taken of households living near fracking sites. Many of these surveys lack a statistically significant volume of participants to support their conclusions. A chemical analysis and investigation into the individual chemicals used along with the biological effects, would yield insight into how these sights may be affecting the people around them.

[Bloomberg Birth Defects Related to Fracking](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-08-26/fracking-link-to-birth-defects-probed-in-early-research.html)