

Uses of Drugs by Pregnant Women During Pregnancy: A Short Communication

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If anyone is pregnant or thinking about getting pregnant and wants a healthy baby, then it is very important to avoid the use of drugs during pregnancy. Illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, and methamphetamine, commonly used over-the-counter medicines, along with substances such as caffeine and alcohol, are not the only drugs that are harmful to fetal development; can have lasting effects on an unborn child [1]. Pregnant women who misuse substances i.e. alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs are positioned at the nexus of public health and criminal justice intervention. The impact of their substance use on their personal health as well as on the health of their fetus, is a public health concern, as professionals in this field are dedicated to improving maternal and infant health. In addition, the prenatal substance use becomes a criminal justice issue since the past three decades [2].

The four general categories of substances abused by pregnant women are Central nervous system depressants, including alcohol, anxiolytics, sedatives, and Hypnotics; stimulants, including amphetamines and cocaine; Opiates; and Hallucinogens/psychotomimetics, including Phencyclidine (PCP) and Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD) [3]. The physician should ask the patient about the type, amount, and frequency of substance use in a nonjudgmental manner, when performing a substance use history. It is important to obtain information regarding the exact amount of illegal drugs being used at the time the patient discovered she was pregnant, searching for signs of poly-substance abuse. After that the consequences of substance use should be explored, with emphasis on physical symptoms, relationship and employment problems, and psychological/emotional issues [2].

It is possible that the pregnant women may not have a serious or long-lasting problem after using drugs, but the same is not always true for a fetus. Using legal or illegal drugs during pregnancy has a direct impact on the fetus. If pregnant women smoke, drink alcohol, or ingest caffeine, so does the fetus, if they use marijuana or crystal meth, their fetus also feels the impact

of these dangerous drugs and if they are addicted to cocaine also called coke, snow, or blow, they are not only putting their own life on the line, but are risking the health of their unborn baby. The consequences of using cocaine include life-threatening health problems such as respiratory failure, heart attacks, strokes, and seizures, which can also be passed to an unborn baby. The use of these substances also increases the chance of birth defects, premature babies, underweight babies, and stillborn births. Exposure to marijuana also called weed, ganja, dope, or pot and alcohol before birth has been proven to cause behavior problems in early childhood. The child's memory and attentiveness is also affected by these drugs. In addition, it is also found in some studies that babies born to women who use cocaine, alcohol, or tobacco when they are pregnant may have brain structure changes that persist into early adolescence [1].

While a few prescription and medications are considered "safe" during pregnancy, most drugs are not. If someone is taking medications for medical purposes, they must take it with care. They should always read the medication label as many of the products on the label will tell if they are safe for use while pregnant. Natural dietary supplements such as herbs, amino acids, minerals, mega-vitamins might be considered natural, but that does not mean they are safe, the pregnant women before taking any unproven or "natural" remedy should talk with their health care provider. According to the FDA, aspirin and ibuprofen should not be taken during the last 3 months of pregnancy unless the pregnant women are instructed by their doctor to take it. Always talk with doctor about special prenatal vitamins that are safe for pregnant women and their babies [1].

References

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