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Effects of Maternal Cigarette Smoking During Pregnancy on Long-Term Physical and Cognitive Parameters of Child Development

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Abstract

The negative impact of maternal cigarette smoking during pregnancy on the growth and development of the foetus has been well documented. However, the long-term effects of the subsequent cognitive and physical development of the child are less clearly understood. This article presents a critical review of the literature on this topic. The review shows that the effects of prenatal exposure to smoking on children's physical development are mediated by a dose-response relationship. Although the observed effects are long term, they are small and may have no major functional importance. The evidence on the long-term consequences of intellectual function is still unclear. One reason is that very few studies have looked at the long-term consequences of maternal smoking on both physical and cognitive development. More effort is needed to investigate this important issue.

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