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Methamphetamine: The Effect On The Child From Womb, Birth And Beyond



Chiara L Keune, Illinois State University

Abstract

Globally the use of methamphetamine surpasses that of heroin and cocaine combined. As a drug that facilitates weight loss and provides the user with increased energy, it is particularly appealing to women. This raises concerns about its use by pregnant women. This poster highlights what is known about the effects of methamphetamine by pregnant women on the unborn child, and on the long term consequences for the children of these women.



Methamphetamine

- Highly addictive stimulant
- Resembles crushed ice
- Provides intense highs
- Feelings of well-being and confidence
- Appetite suppressant
- Increased wakefulness

Review of the Literature

- Estimated that 90% of drug using women are at child bearing age
- Meth use by pregnant women has increased 3 fold (8%-24%)
- Women account for 1/3 of all illicit substance use
- Multiple risks associated with meth, increased during pregnancy
- High risk population due to
 - Poor nutrition
 - Sexual risk behavior
 - Higher risk of infectious diseases (Hepatitis and HIV)
- Stigma and the repercussions from the CJS may lead to poor antenatal care
- Stresses and discomfort associated with pregnancy may lead to increased use of Meth
 - Higher prevalence of fetal/birth complications



Substance	Effect on Mother during pregnancy	Possible effects on Fetus	Possible effects on newborn	Symptoms of withdrawal
Methamphetamine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stroke • brain damage • miscarriage • placental abruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smaller average head circumference • heart and lung problems • central nervous system damage • brain lesions • increased neonatal mortality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low birth weight • difficulty sucking or swallowing • hypersensitivity to touch • extreme muscle tension • respiratory problems • decreased arousal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excessive crying • irritability • gastrointestinal disturbance • agitation • vomiting • tachycardia • intracranial hemorrhaging

Global Perspective

- IDEAL study and landmark Swedish study first of their kind to explore patterns of methamphetamine use during pregnancy
- Abandonment of methamphetamine babies a serious threat
- USA 59% are placed in foster care
- Thailand 39% placed in foster care
- Of the Swedish cohort 20% placed in foster care

Treatment Options

- Effects associated with fetus defects may lead to developmental problems in early childhood
- Children have been treated similarly to those born of alcohol or cocaine addicted mothers
- Studies suggest that antenatal care visits may positively impact the use of methamphetamine
- Integrated antenatal and addiction treatment programs have been found:
 - Effective at retaining positive mother and baby outcomes
- Treatment at any stage is crucial to both mother and baby

HOW METH IS USED



Contacts

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