

MEETING ABSTRACT

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# Effects of harmful factors and alcohol consumption by mother concerning the physical and mental health of her child

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## Background

Mental retardation is a developmental disability that first appears at children under the age of 18. About 5% of the mentally retarded population is affected by severe mental retardation. Approximately 20% of the population with mental deficiency presents moderate mental retardation and about 75% have mild mental retardation. A very important factor that cause mental retardation of child is the alcohol consumption by mother on the pregnancy period.

Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is a group of birth defects occurring in an infant as a result of maternal alcohol abuse during pregnancy. This syndrome was first described in 1968. It is currently the leading cause of mental retardation in western civilisation, outranking Down syndrome.

## Materials and methods

To realise this study, we investigated 596 children hospitalized on period of 1999-2001 in Neuropsychiatry Infantile Section of Neurology and Psychiatry Clinical Hospital from Oradea. Among these, 393 have different degree of mental retardation. We realised family investigation and followed the hereditary antecedents, the harmful factors, alcohol consumption by mother, smoking and social and economic situation of families with mentally retarded children.

## Results

Among 393 children with mental retardation, 216 have mild mental retardation (63 of them have different

harmful factors in their families), 87 have moderate mental retardation (40 of them have different harmful factors in their families) and 90 have severe mental retardation (33 have different harmful factors in their families).

## Conclusions

This study shows that in general, when in a family exists one child with mental retardation there exist at least one toxic factor. So, the harmful factor can be added hereditary antecedents and particularly the advanced age of mother. Fetal alcohol syndrome is a group of birth defects occurring in an infant as a result of maternal alcohol abuse during pregnancy period.

Fetal alcohol syndrome is completely preventable. Prognosis depends on the degree of mental and neurological development. The rate of this harmful factor is increased in population from rural environment. FAS is a public health issue.

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