

POOR NUTRITION AS A CAUSE OF MENTAL RETARDATION AMONG CHILDREN

Good and proper nutrition during and after pregnancy of the mother helps develop the mental development among children. It is important for the mothers to take good and have a proper diet when bearing a child.

Mental retardation is a lifetime illness and has no cure. This would give the family great hardship dealing and understanding the child. There are countless reasons why many children around the globe are mentally retarded. One of those is due to poor nutrition that may cause infections, intoxications and low mental development of the child. Mental retardation can occur as a result of the mother's behaviors or illnesses during pregnancy. Behaviors that can affect the fetus developing brain include poor nutrition, excessive alcohol consumption, drug abuse, and cigarette smoking during pregnancy. This is due to the mother's lack of awareness during pregnancy at the same time, after the delivery of the child.

Environmental factors that affect mental development include emotional and physical neglect. Infants, who are neglected, as well as those who do not receive adequate nutrition may suffer irreversible mental setbacks or worst, mental retardation.

Mental retardation is classified into different levels. The mild level of mental retardation ranges from IQ of 50-70, moderate and severe level ranges from IQ of 20-49 and the profound level of mental retardation which ranges from an IQ of 0-19.

The diagnosis of mental retardation is reserved for individuals who achieve low IQ scores and demonstrate adaptational deficiencies, particularly in the areas of personal independence and social responsibility.

During infancy and early childhood, these criteria include the development of sensory motor skills, communication skills (speech and language), self-help skills, and social skills such as learning to interact with others, getting along with others, and later, participating in group activities. In addition, adaptive behavior includes the use of adequate reasoning and judgment in achieving mastery over one's environment.

Ignored or neglected infants who are not provided with the mental and physical stimulation required for normal development may suffer irreversible learning impairment. Children who live in poverty and suffer from malnutrition, unhealthy living conditions, abuse, and improper or inadequate medical care are at a higher risk. Exposure to lead or mercury can also cause mental retardation.

People with Mental Retardation are raised in homes with absent fathers and with physically or emotionally unavailable mothers. During infancy, they are not exposed to the same quality and quantity of tactile and kinesthetic stimulations as other children. Often they are left unattended in a crib or on the floor of dwelling. Although there are noises, odors, and colors in the environment, the stimuli are not as organized as those found in the middle-class and upper-class environments.

Good and proper nutrition during and after pregnancy has a lot to do with the mental development of the baby. Poverty may basically affect the nutrition of the child. It may cause brain damage or may be it may cause mental retardation.

It is very necessary that a pregnant woman must be aware what are the dos and don'ts during and after pregnancy. In this stage, she must have her choice. She must know her limitations until she'll deliver the baby. She has to be aware what are the possibilities and consequences she will face when continuing taking her vices during pregnancy. Major support of the whole family must also be done in this stage.

Poverty is not a hindrance to have a healthy baby. As long as both of the baby's parents work hand in hand for the goodness of the child, nothing is impossible.