

Fetal alcohol syndrome

Fetal alcohol syndrome is a specific clinical entity caused by the consumption of ethyl alcohol by a pregnant woman. Ethyl alcohol is a proven teratogen that adversely affects fetal development - throughout pregnancy. The syndrome was described as a separate clinical entity by the Americans Jones and Smith in 1973.

Patogenesis

The cause of fetal alcohol syndrome is ethyl alcohol. The majority of cases of fetal alcohol syndrome occur in mothers who drink large quantities of alcoholic beverages more often. However, a single intake of a large amount of ethyl alcohol (party, celebration) is also teratogenic. In addition, there is no universally accepted "safe amount of alcohol" during pregnancy - therefore, the best recommendation for all pregnant women is to not drink alcohol at all. From this point of view, the first few weeks of pregnancy are especially problematic, when a woman often does not even know about her pregnancy. Ethyl alcohol, however, has a pathological effect throughout pregnancy, not just in the first trimester.

Clinical picture

Fetal alcohol syndrome is characterized by a number of manifestations, the most significant of which include:

- **Growth retardation** fetus (newborns are mostly hypotrophic, growth disorders often persist even in childhood, affected children generally do not thrive).
- Typical **craniofacial dysmorphism** (varying degrees of microcephaly, hypoplastic maxilla, flattened philtrum, flat midface).
- **CNS damage** (various degrees of mental retardation, cognitive disorders, behavioral disorders).
- Other associated abnormalities, various structural congenital developmental defects, congenital heart defects etc.

Consumption of alcoholic beverages during pregnancy can also cause isolated CNS or heart damage, without classic dysmorphic manifestations. It can also cause the development of alcohol dependence in the fetus. These cases are not included under the diagnosis of dysmorphic fetal alcohol syndrome.

Links

Related articles

- Teratogens
- Teratogenesis
- Alcoholism

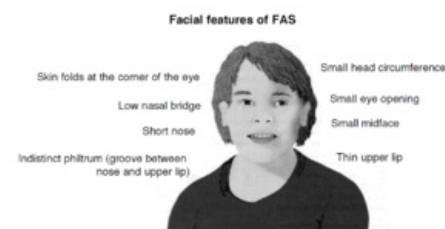
External links

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome - eMedicine (<https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/974016-overview>)

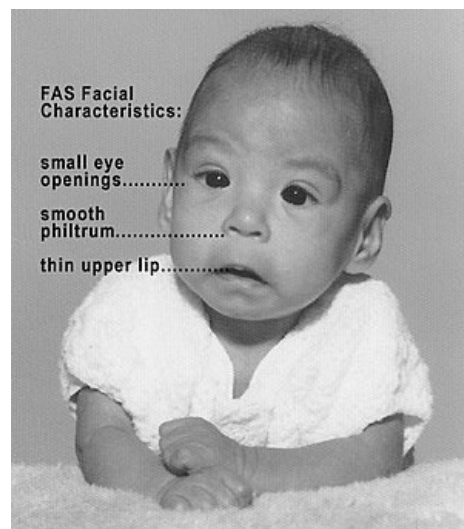
Source

- ŠÍPEK, Antonín. *Vrozené vývojové vady - Fetální alkoholový syndrom* [online]. [cit. 2009-06-22]. <http://www.vrozene-vady.cz/vrozene-vady/index.php?co=fetalni_alkoholovy_syndrom>.

Craniofacial features associated with fetal alcohol syndrome



Child with FAS: Short nose with low arch, flattened philtrum, small head circumference, ptosis, thin upper lip...



Child with FAS