Pregnancy smoking and the unborn child

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This paper discusses the different effects ofsmokingto pregnant woman. The paper is divided into three parts. First part of the paper shows the statistical data available in the United States about smoking. Second part of the paper discusses the different experiments that had been done by experts to compare the babies that are not exposed to smoking. Lastly, the third part of the paper shows the other complications of exposure to smoking. A conclusion is also provided in the last part of the paper

Smoking is considered as a habit that had contributed negative effects not only to pregnant women but also to people who are not pregnant. There are two ways of exposure to cigarette smoke. First is the exposure through first hand smoking, where a person inhales the smoke through smoking and the second hand smoking where a person inhales the smoke from the cigarette of another smoker. According to statistics from the Center for Disease Control and Development (CDC) (2006) from the Women and Tobacco, cigarette had been the cause of death of 178, 000.

Further investigation shows that ninety percent of women who had lung cancers can be attributed to smoking. Women who smoke have an increased risk for diseases such as cancer, coronary heart disease and pulmonary diseases. Looking at the National Statistics from the Center for Disease Control and Development, there is an estimate of 18. 1% of women with ages 18 and above is cigarette smokers. Statistics also show that there is an estimate of 18% pregnant women from the ages of 15 to 44 years.

As stated above, smoking does not only involve the first hand smoker but also the second hand smoker. Looking at the statistics from the CDC (2006), second hand smoke exposure had declined. It was further explained that the

levels of cotinine had fallen down by 70% for the years 1988 to 1991 and 2001-2002. However, even though there has been a decline on the exposure, 126 million non-smoking Americans both children and adult are exposed to this second hand exposure. Children according to the figures from CDC are more exposed than adults. To be exact, 60% of the children in the age bracket of 3 to 11 years old are exposed to second hand smoke.

To understand fully the implications on the effect of smoking to the child, an investigation was done by the proponent of the study. There have been several studies that had been made in the past that can further explain the effect of smoking to children. Josephine Thomas had made an experiment regarding the exposure of children to smoking. Based on the report written by Thomas (2000), the effects that might be experienced by children who were exposed to smoke are infertility, coagulation problems, obstetric complications such as extra uterine pregnancy and placenta previa, and intrauterine growth retardation.

Results on the study had also shown that unborn children who had been exposed to tobacco smoke could indicate a negative behavior for toddlers and smoking experimentation among adolescents. Mothers who had smoked during pregnancy had scored their children high on toddler negativity, although there are other factors that might influence the children to do so but being exposed to cigarettes had shown that the data proved that the children high on toddler negativity had been exposed. The experts had also experimented on the early experimentation of adolescents with regard to smoking. The results of the study are not clear enough to know. However, experts are speculating that nervous system damage could have happened

because of maternal smoking. The damage can be expressed as inattention aggression, depressionandanxiety.

Another experiment that had been done to compare the effects of maternal smoking exposure is the possible genetic mutation chromosomes of the babies. Based on the results of the study, there are 12. 1% smokers and 3. 5% non-smokers who had shown a structural chromosomal abnormaities, 10. 5% smokers and 8% non-smokers had shown chromosomal instability and 15. 7% smokers and 10. 1% non-smokers had shown chromosomal lesions. Among the three changed items, the chromosomal instability and chromosomal lesions pose a risk of cancer and blood malignancies to the child who had been exposed to smoke.

Lannero et al. (2006) have another experiment that can be associated with the comparison of smokers and non-smokers. The experts had studied 4, 089 infants and had observed the babies up to two months. Questionnaires was used by the proponents in order to determine the status of the infants. Based on the results of the study, it has been proven that maternal smoking increase the risk of recurrent wheezing for babies up to two years of age. Unborn and newlyborn babies are prone to recurrent wheezing.

This can also be diagnosed as asthma by the doctors. Lastly, Rebagliato et al (1995) had correlated the exposure of the babies to smoke and the weight of the baby born. The experiment was done in Spain. The duration of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke at home, work, vehicles and Public places had been collected through a questionnaire. Based on the results there is a very small difference in the weight of the child that had been exposed.

Looking at the results closely, these small difference had been a basis that there is a growth retardation to the child exposed to maternal smoking.

There are many more experiments that could have been done by the experts to prove their point about exposure to maternal smoking. Healthgoods had shown all the possible effects of maternal smoking. Smoking is said to limit the amount of nutrients and oxygen that would react the unborn child. According to the American Lung Association, maternal smoking brings about several negative effects to the baby.

This include miscarriages, still births, very low birth weight and could also result to a sudden infant death syndrome. Other implications of having been exposed to maternal smoke is that the newly-born children suffers more from lung problems, learning deficiencies and behavioral problems. As stated above, behavioral problems are one of the implications of tobacco prenatal exposure. Ear infections are also possible. Breast Feeding mothers are also discouraged to smoke because the chemicals in the cigarettes could enter the breast milk of the mother such as nicotine and carbon monoxide and this can be passed on to the baby.

The child and the mother are closely linked together because when women are pregnant, the child and the mother share the same body, inhales the same air and eats the samefood. Having a child is very sensitive because whatever the mother does to herself affects the baby. If the mother is a cigarette addict, then she must try to curb her habits well to avoid putting that child that she is carrying at risk. There are many implications, and complications that the child can experience if he or she is exposed to smoking. As much as possible, it is really not advisable to smoke or be

surrounded by smokers if a particular person is pregnant. Not smoking a cigarette helps the mother avoid the first hand smoke exposure. However in public places, mothers should take good care that they are not exposed to smokers. Second Hand smoke exposure also has an effect on the baby.

The website Healthgoods. com had enumerated several tips to stop smoking to help mothers avoid risking their child's life. It would be helpful for pregnant women who are addicted to cigarettes to read websites, pamphlets or ask advice from adoctorto help them stop their habits of smoking.

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