

Example of drug abuse in pregnancy research proposal

[Health & Medicine](#), [Drug Abuse](#)



Introduction

The problem of substance abuse among pregnant women continues to be a national health issue. Estimates indicate that about 4 percent of all live births in the United States occur in women who abuse illicit or prescription drugs such as barbiturates, opioid pain relievers, benzodiazepines and stimulants during pregnancy. In addition to abusing prescription and illicit drugs, women also use tobacco and alcohol during pregnancy. Of course this has effects. According to Economidoy et al (2012), maternal drug abuse can have an effect on pregnancy outcomes as well as childhood development and health. Children who are born to women who used such substances during pregnancy are at a greater risk for prematurity, impaired physical growth and development, low birth weight, learning disabilities and behavioral problems. Therefore, there is a need to address this national health issue.

However, many communities criminalize and prosecute women who use these substances during pregnancy. According to NPA (2010), some states twist or bend criminal statutes to prosecute women who abuse drugs during pregnancy so as to punish them with jail sentences. Other states equate drug abuse in pregnancy to child abuse and neglect resulting in the loss of the baby's custody at birth. However, these measures are punitive and do not provide the answer to substance abuse during pregnancy. Instead, these measures undermine fetal and maternal wellbeing, and discourage the development of programs that can adequately address the needs of the women and their children. This is the consequences of the criminal justice system make women reluctant to access prenatal care services. Therefore,

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proper approaches, support and health care provision are key to addressing this national health issue. This study explores the importance of fully funded comprehensive drug treatments for pregnant women, instead of civil or criminal punishment.

References

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