

MODERN WAYS OF THE PREVENTION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT THROUGHOUT THE PERINATAL PERIOD

Резюме. У статті висвітлено складові виникнення проблеми жорстокого поводження з дітьми. Визначено роль пренатального стресу, як основи формування порушень соматичної, психологічної та соціальної адаптації дитини, починаючи з пренатального періоду розвитку. Наведено необхідність комплексного підходу до запобігання насильства та жорстокого поводження з дітьми на сучасному етапі.

Ключові слова: жорстоке поводження з дитиною, насильство, перинатальний період, пренатальний стрес, первинна профілактика.

Summary The article is devoted to the main components of violence and child maltreatment. It was shown the role of prenatal stress in the forming of somatic, psychological and social desadaptation of child since the prenatal period. The special consideration was given to integrated approach of medical professionals, psychologists, social workers and lawyers to solve the problem of the violence and child maltreatment in the modern society

Key words: child maltreatment, perinatal period, prenatal stress, primary prevention, violence.

The attitude towards children is one of the important indicator of spiritual development and social maturity of a society. When the State invests the resources into childhood it ensures permanent economic and spiritual development.

Unfortunately today the violence and child maltreatment are the characteristics of the reality and seriously influences on the life of modern society. Analyzing the causes of violence, it is necessary to highlight the social, culture, economic, family, individual and crisis aspects. Family context is one of the important, because it depends on the structure of family, the characteristics of the parents, their level of intelligence, presence of psychopathology or psychical disorders and their understanding the responsibility for the health state and development of the child, the quality of its living environment.

Effective solution of the problem of violence requires the deep analysis of its causes and a certain level of the participation of health professionals. The promotion of healthy lifestyle, the protection from abuse, violence, the creation of the safe living environment for children's life and development are the priority lines in Ukraine («National Plan of Action for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children for the period to 2016»).

Child abuse and neglect is a global problem of modernity with serious consequences for health, however, in Ukraine until recently, this topic has been closed for extensive discussion and considered only from the legal point of view [1]. Today the attitude towards children includes not only respect of their rights and freedoms, but also the scientific understanding the role of biological, psychological and social factors in the development of the child, the responsibility

of a family and community in creating a harmonious and safe environment for them.

According to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD 10), the syndrome of child maltreatment includes: neglect, abandonment, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and other symptoms. Scientific view on early childhood development underlines the importance of the prenatal period and the first years of life to form the health in the future. It is the most intensive period of brain development when the brain is most sensitive to environmental influences.

Numerous scientific studies show a close connection between necessary components for the normal development of the child and its health state. This approach can be entirely attributed to the prenatal period, which is the determining in the process of becoming human health. Postnatal adaptation of the body, health state, physical and psychological development of a person depends on the course of the prenatal period, style of pregnancy perception, the level of maternal care after child's birth. Information that was obtained by child prenatally, in combination with the basic genetic information determines the features of mental and physical development of the human [3, 4, 5, 7, 8].

Physiological studies of famous scientists Bowlby J. (1951), Ainsworth M. (1969, 1983), Winnicott DW (1994, 1998) have substantiated the approach to prenatal system «mother-child» as to a single system. Today the perinatal psychology considers the relationships between mother and child as an important factor of a healthy or psychopathological development. Russian perinatal psychologists describe the prenatal relationship between mother and fetus as the process of formation of the primary maternal attachment [4, 7]. The phenomenon of «maternal attachment» in recent years is the focus of researchers and is considered important in the formation of an effective maternal behavior, the harmonious development of the child and its positive adaptation to the social environment. The maternal factor is an integrative basis that determines the further development of the child. The psychological state of pregnant woman significantly affects the formation of mental functions of the prelate. Violations of the emotional attachment in «mother-child» relationships in the prenatal period are one of the most important factors of mental disorders of the child. In such situations we can talk about the prenatal stress or prenatal trauma [3, 7]. Factors of prenatal stress have the strongest damaging effect on the brain structure of the fetus. Stress hormones (exogenous glucocorticoids) influence on the prenatal brain and lead to the primary damage of important structures and mechanisms of the brain. Stress during the prenatal period affects the development of those areas of the brain that play an important role in the regulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis - the hippocampus, frontal cortex, and amygdala. In future the inadequate response of the stress system impairs growth and development of children, causes endocrine, metabolic, autoimmune and psychiatric disorders [6, 9, 12].

Fetal development is implemented not only through hormonal metabolism with mother but through the sounds that reach the fetus, through the emotional and physical feelings of the mother [7]. Increasing cases of violence which are associated with prenatal factors was discussed in scientific studies of perinatal

psychologists. They showed that boys in case of stressed pregnancy had the complications at birth and in their teenager's period in 4 times more often they have committed acts related with violence than the teenagers of control group. The similar results were obtained in those children, whose mothers ignored the pregnancy and didn't want child. In future the kids who have been damaged by prenatal trauma are susceptible to stress, fear and aggression. Prenatal psychological trauma can be more potential source of the behavior associated with violence in future life than the psychological trauma received in early childhood or as a result of the war [3, 11, 13].

Psychological and social consequences of the prenatal stress for child appear as difficulties of the socialization - children try to solve their problems in antisocial and criminal sphere. Children who experienced «prenatal trauma» are often prone to deviant forms of behavior; in the future they have chronic depression with aggression, autoaggression, low self-esteem and problems with their reproductive and mental health. All these factors can contribute to the manifestations of violence in the adult behavior [3, 6, 11, 12, 13].

Thus it is important to understand why some persons resort to violence, where are the origins of violence. The manifestations of child maltreatment have not only legal, social, psychological but also the medical roots. Medical component plays an important role because initially it determines mental health of a person and is important in processes of medical, psychological and social rehabilitation of violence victims.

Problems and questions that arise at the stage of primary health care are medical and bioethical. Therefore the society and professionals must take into account not only the level and quality of medical care, but also define the legal and bioethical role of the family [2]. Prevention steps must include the elaboration of correct tactics for the physician of primary contact with family in case of inadequate attitude toward child by the parents (or guardians) including the prenatal period. Family doctors and pediatricians should require responsibility of parent to ensure children's rights to a safe environment, starting with the prenatal period.

The program of integrated scientific and practical efforts of medical professionals, psychologists, social workers and justice can be as an effective step to solving the problem of violence in the modern society. Primary prevention of child maltreatment logically has to be started with the prevention of the prenatal stress. First of all is necessary to ensure guaranteed access to educational projects for youth and future parents. The main purpose is to provide information about the promotion of positive strategies for dealing with children starting with the prenatal period of development. The acceptance of a child by mother increases the activation of physiological systems of the baby, gives him positive emotions, and meets the need of the child in the protection. In such conditions the child since the prenatal period has an opportunity for harmonious development and adaptation, which eliminates the propensity for violence in adolescence. The important role in the realization of these ideas belongs to the media, social organizations and special projects.

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