

Unintended pregnancies and exposure to potential human teratogens

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: We aimed to investigate the risk factors associated with unintended pregnancies as well as the association between unintended pregnancies and potential teratogenic exposures. **METHODS:** A cross-sectional survey was performed among women attending the Maternity School of the Samsung Cheil Hospital and Women's Health Care Center in Seoul, Korea. Demographic data, obstetric history, socioeconomic status, intention to become pregnant, and exposure to potential teratogens were obtained. **RESULTS:** A total of 1354 women with median age of 29 years and median gestational age of 29 weeks were included. Of these, an educational level above high school was 74.2%, primigravida was 77.3% and unintended pregnancy was 48%. In the logistic regression analysis, women younger than 24 years of age had a relative risk (RR) of 2.5 (95% confidence interval [CI], 1.3-4.7) of having an unintended pregnancy and women with lower household monthly income level had a RR of 1.3 (95% CI, 1.0-1.6). Women with unintended pregnancies had an RR of 1.9 (95% CI, 1.5-2.5), 3.0 (95% CI, 2.0-4.5), 1.5 (95% CI, 1.0-2.3), 2.9 (95% CI, 1.1-7.2), and 2.0 (95% CI, 1.62.4) of being exposed to alcohol, medications, cigarette smoking, X-rays, or to any of these, respectively, during the first trimester of pregnancy. **CONCLUSIONS:** Unintended pregnancies are more likely to occur among young women with a lower household monthly income level. Prenatal counseling should be especially recommended for women with unintended pregnancies in order to evaluate whether they have been exposed to potential teratogenic agents. (c) 2005 Wiley-Liss, Inc.