OBSTERIC complications of the consumpción of cocaine/crack during pregnancy: integrativa review

Conclusions: the prevention of the consumption of cocaine/crack during pregnancy can reduce the obstetric complications and prevent the fetal and neonatal mortality. Scientific researches in nursering must be stimulated, as well as the elaboration of effective actions and public policy. Descriptors: Drug Abuse; Cocaine/Crack; Pregnancy; Nursing.

Method: integrative review guided by the question "Which obstetric complications are associated with the consumption of cocaine/crack during pregnancy?". LILACS, MED CARIBE, MEDLINE and COLECIONA SUS were used in the search of articles published in the period from 2004 to March 2014, in Portuguese, English or Spanish. Results: the beginning of the consumption of cocaine/crack by pregnant women is related to sociodemographic characteristics, life style and psychological profile. The consumption of cocaine/crack during pregnancy provides adverse effects to the mother-child health, such as restrict intrauterine growth, prematurity and low birth weight. Conclusion: the prevention of the consumption of cocaine/crack during pregnancy can reduce the obstetric complications and prevent the fetal and neonatal mortality. Scientific researches in nursering must be stimulated, as well as the elaboration of effective actions and public policy. Descriptors: Drug Abuse; Cocaine/Crack; Pregnancy; Nursing.

Descritores: Abuso De Drogas; Cocaína/Crack; Gestação; Enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: examinar la evidencia en la literatura científica acerca de las complicaciones obstétricas de la cocaina/crack durante el embarazo. Método: revisión integradora LILACS guiado por la pregunta ¿Cuáles complicaciones obstétricas están asociadas con la cocaina/crack durante la gestación? Fueron utilizados LILACS, MED CARIBE, MEDLINE y COLECIONA SUS en busca de artículos publicados entre 2004 y marzo de 2014, en portugués, inglés o español. Resultados: el comienzo del consumo de cocaina/crack por las mujeres embarazadas se relaciona con las características socio-demográficas, estilo de vida y perfil psicológico. El consumo de cocaina durante la gestación proporciona efectos nocivos para la salud materno-infantil, como el crecimiento intrauterino restringido, a prematuridad, y bajo peso al nacer. Conclusion: la prevención del consumo de cocaina/crack durante la gestación puede reducir las complicaciones obstétricas y prevenir a mortalidad fetal y neonatal. La investigación científica en enfermería debe fomentarse, así como el desarrollo de acciones y políticas públicas eficaces. Descriptores: Abuso De Drogas; Cocaína/Crack; Gestación; Enfermería.
Obstetric complications of the consumption…

factor in the marketing of the drug, making it difficult to negotiate for condom use, and makes these women increasingly vulnerable to injuries as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), violence, and unplanned pregnancy. Thus, the objective is to analyze evidences in the scientific literature about the obstetric complications of cocaine/crack during pregnancy.

INTRODUCTION

The consumption of drugs is a phenomenon since the former civilizations, which allied to the cultural diversification and to the changes in the consumption pattern, favored the emergence of many public health problems, bringing costly repercussions to the society in general.

Regarding the emergence and evolution of the use of cocaine/crack, information is scanty. From 90’s, the consumption of the substance has expanded in Brazil, leading to repercussions on the lives of users and the social environment. The relentless research of the Deputy substance to the effects of dependence favored the increase of violence, risky sexual behaviors and dissemination of various diseases.

Cocaine is presented as a powerful stimulant to the Central Nervous System (CNS), whose active ingredient is extracted from the coca plant Erythroxylon. Through chemical processes, cocaine hydrochloride is obtained and shaped as a white powder that can be aspirated or injected by users. Furthermore, users can also smoke the drug, when it’s produced as crack, merla or the basic paste of cocaine.

According to a study conducted in Brazil, the crack is configured as the third most used illicit substance (0,7%), behind marijuana (8,8%) and solvents (6,1%). It is worth highlighting that using this substance came into evidence due to their insignificant amount, facilitating the sale on the black market and the speed of the effects on the individual. Given the presented data, one can see that the use of drugs, and among them the crack, is taking increasing proportions in the general population, which has spread alarmingly among women. This trend is based on the "gender equality", as a result of changes in the lifestyle of women, mostly occurred in recent years. However, this gender issue in the use of illicit drugs and the meaning of crack for women’s health remain unclear, to the detriment of the scarcity of data.

Concerning the literature, the use of cocaine/crack, over the past 25 years has increased among fertile women. It is estimated that 90% of female users are at reproductive age, and therefore a significant part of this population is pregnant. As a result, it is worth underscoring several harmful effects of consumption of these substances on the health of female users.

Among these effects, there is a plurality of sexual partners and prostitution, giving the unprotected sexual practice an important

METHOD

Integrative review study, which seeks to contribute to the incorporation of evidence in clinical practice by the summary presentation of the results of researches about a specific topic or issue in a systematic and orderly manner.

During the operationalization of this study, the following steps were established: research question formulation, data collection, analysis and interpretation of collected data, and presentation of results. The following question was formulated to guide the review: “What obstetric complications are associated with cocaine/crack during pregnancy?”.

The literature review was conducted with the Literatura Latino-Americana and of Caribe en Ciencias da Saúde (LILACS), MED CARIBE, MEDLINE and COLECIONA SUS, that are part of the Virtual Health Library. The inclusion criteria were: complete studies, published between 2004 and march 2014; in Portuguese, English or Spanish; indexed by the terms of Descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS): drug abuse, cocaine/crack and pregnancy, that focused on obstetric complications associated with the use of cocaine/crack during pregnancy and level of evidence between 1 and 4.

The literature review was conducted in the Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences (LILACS), MED CARIBBEAN, MEDLINE and collects SUS that are part of the Virtual Health Library. The inclusion criteria were:. Complete studies, published between 2004 to March 2014; in Portuguese, English or Spanish; indexed by the terms of Descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS): drug abuse, cocaine/crack and pregnancy, that addressed obstetric complications associated with the use of cocaine/crack during pregnancy and level of evidence between 1 and 4.

It is worth emphasizing that the purpose of the inclusion of the level of evidence criteria in the methodology of this study was to incorporate the selection of publications to Evidence-Based Practice in order to select the best evidence on the subject, through a hierarchical classification.

This classification intends to analyze the degree of the study evidence, based on the study design, which was determined according
Concerning the evidence criteria, the publications showed an evidence level 4, mostly 5,9,10, only one study relative to a systematic review and meta-analysis 6 pertained to the evidence level 1.

- **Cocaine crack and profile of pregnant women users**

The problem of psychoactive substance consumption by pregnant women, as cocaine and crack, has proved to be multifactorial. Thus, it is essential to know the profile of these users for a better interpretation of the causal and consequential factors of this addiction. Its objective is to acquire a better basis for developing health actions and more effective public policies aimed at this population.

The analysis of the selected articles contains epidemiological data showing aspects related to early consumption, exposure to hazards, and associated diseases.
A retrospective study based on the analysis of medical records and interviews with 85 pregnant women crack dependent admitted to the psychiatric unit of a maternity hospital, found that sociodemographic characteristics, lifestyle and psychological profile of these women were closely linked to early beginning use of crack.  

The first crack trial age has revealed early, being comprised in the range from 11 to 35 years.  The commonly reported reasons for the consumption of this substance are sadness or relief from stress, influence of third parties, apart from low cost and easy access. It was also noted that other types of drugs are used concomitantly, such as tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. In general, the early use can be justified as an alternative to deal with the adverse social determinants that these women are exposed, such as the lack of family support, the homeless condition and the low purchasing power.

As for the lifestyle and exposure to risk, the exchange of sex for money/drugs appears to be quite prevalent (44,7%), followed by theft practice (41,2%). The home of abandonment (38,8%) also presents itself as an important risk factor for the lives of these women, since much of this portion is homeless. Religious practice is related to these findings, as a protective factor, since most pregnant women have no religion.  

Regarding the clinical conditions of pregnant women, the multiparous is a predominant factor, as the majority of these women is single and with multiple partners. Associated with it is a significant prevalence of seropositivity for HIV, HCV, HBV and syphilis. From this perspective, it is noticed that pregnant women users of psychoactive substances like crack have a greater connection with sexual promiscuity, unintended pregnancy and risk of STD. This reality presents itself as a major public health problem, because besides the adverse effects caused to the mother's body, the consumption of these substances contribute significantly to the practice of prostitution, facilitating the spread of communicable diseases to fetal health.

In accordance to this, a survey of 394 pregnant women followed in primary care units showed that in addition of unplanned pregnancy, pregnant women in illicit drug dependence had lower education, lower adherence to prenatal care and therefore were open to higher risks of obstetric complications and fetal development. There was also the possibility of abandonment of children, or the inability to take care of them. It’s considered the use of illicit drugs, such as cocaine and crack, a key to the characterization of high-risk pregnancy, not only as a result of obstetric complications or effects of using these substances on fetal development, but by social risks and emotional, inherent vulnerabilities of these women.

The analysis of the above articles reveals a characteristic profile of pregnant women using cocaine/crack, determined by the exposure factors and onset of early consumption of these substances by the dependent pregnant women, besides coming from unfavorable socioeconomic conditions, such as disruption and family abandonment, poor education, unemployment, lack of access to health services and involvement in illegal activities such as theft and trafficking.

This phenomenon has important consequences for health in general, since the addiction of cocaine or crack, contributes significantly to the occurrence of unplanned pregnancies, exposure to STDs and strengthening of the transmission chain, and future obstetric complications, with a consequent increase of perinatal mortality.

- Cocaine crack and associated obstetric complications

The complications in pregnancy resulting from cocaine/crack pose significant risks to maternal health, whose essence is not merely an obstetric injury, but also provides high magnitude of harm to the newborn, child and adult health of these fetuses.

From this perspective, a study found that pregnant women who receive drug generally initiated late prenatal care, and, because of this, had a minor accompaniment of pregnancy, which favored the various clinical complications such as anemia and malnutrition. It was also evident that the consumption of drugs such as cocaine during pregnancy was closely associated with complications during childbirth, namely premature delivery, abruptio placentae, arrhythmias and other adverse effects.

Furthermore, it is noticed how this addiction substantially retards the access of users to care practices in health during pregnancy, which complicates the treatment of obstetric complications that can be prevented if found early.

In a meta-analysis of research, it was attested that cocaine use during pregnancy is associated, in addition to prematurity, to an increased risk of intrauterine growth...
Obstetric complications of the consumption of cocaine/crack... The study also reveals the profile of pregnant women using cocaine/crack, which risk factors are related to unfavorable social determinants, such as the low level of education, disadvantaged economic status and family structure. These factors are associated directly to early initiation of these women with cocaine/crack, as well as other types of illicit drugs.

Given the analyzed studies, it appears that pregnant women using cocaine/crack are doubly susceptible to the harmful effects of these substances. Firstly, because of the common consequences between men and women, but also by those associated with pregnancy and childbirth and the health of the fetus. Obstetric effects of consumption can lead to premature labor, abruptio placentae, intrauterine growth restriction, low birth weight, besides cardiopulmonary risks and emotional problems that interfere with women's self-care and their children care, which can lead even to death.

It is emphasized that the prevention of cocaine/crack in pregnancy can reduce these complications and prevent fetal and neonatal mortality. Thus, measures aimed at the rehabilitation of pregnant women using cocaine/crack, and that can enable the recovery of the physiological and cognitive balance necessary for the exercise of motherhood become necessary. The early identification of these women is essential in order to make possible the realization of a quality prenatal care, with appropriate therapies to those given drug addictions.

Nursing has a key role in this process, because, given its connection to the individual and their social contribution, it carries out promotion, protection, prevention and rehabilitation of these users. Researches addressing the theme of cocaine/crack consumption by pregnant women should be encouraged in order to establish more effective interventions of refuge and humanized care to this population. Thus, it becomes essential to the production of larger scientific evidence ruled by the issue of cocaine/crack consumption by pregnant women, so that they develop actions and more effective public policies.

REFERENCES
cited -


Obstetric complications of the consumption of...