

THE OFFSPRING OF ALCOHOLIC MOTHERS. Christy Ulleland, Richard P. Wennberg, Robert P. Igo & Nathan J. Smith. Univ. of Wash. Sch. of Med., Seattle, Wash.

Maternal chronic alcoholism was associated with 41% of infants who were born undergrown for gestational age at King County Hospital during the past two years.

In order to assess the risk of maternal alcoholism on the outcome of pregnancy and subsequent development of the infant, the offspring of 11 alcoholic mothers were followed closely in a special clinic.

Twelve infants (one set of twins) were studied. Ten infants (9 mothers) were undergrown for gestational age (range 34-40 weeks). Except for poor maternal diet, lack of prenatal care (7 mothers), and premature delivery (4 mothers), pregnancies were apparently normal. Five mothers were 35 years old or older. Six were Indian, four Caucasian, and one Negro. Detailed nutritional histories from 7 mothers indicated that 5/7 had deficient diets during pregnancy, 2 of which were severely deficient in both calories and protein.

Eight infants failed to grow, with weight and head circumference remaining below the third percentile. Six of the eight were receiving adequate diets at home for growth, and two infants with a history of poor diet failed to grow normally when hospitalized. Gesell or Denver developmental evaluations were administered to 10 infants. Two were normal, three suspect, and five clearly had retarded development.

These observations indicate that infants of alcoholic mothers are at high risk for pre- and post-natal growth and developmental failure, and suggest that greater attention should be given to alcoholic women during the child bearing years.