

## Poster journal

### Baby's smile, mom's happiness

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#### Commentary:

A healthy-women during the period of conception has higher chances of a successful delivery and a healthy child<sup>1</sup>. At the time of maternity, the mother's oral health has a direct relationship to the birth outcome and simultaneously, the infant's oral health. Gingival and periodontal diseases are the most commonly observed diseases found in mothers who neglect their dental hygiene. These conditions, if left untreated in the mother have significant implications on the infant which comprises of preterm birth, preeclampsia and delivery of low-birth weight babies<sup>2</sup>.

Oral microbiota which comprises of *Streptococcus mutans* as the most cariogenic microorganism has a unique property of vertical transmission from the mother to the foetus. Consequently, there are higher chances of infants being prone to early development of caries in mothers with higher cariogenic flora<sup>2</sup>. There are large proportions of low-birth weight babies resulting from inadequate nutrition during pregnancy. The demand for nutrition increases during the course of pregnancy and insufficient nutrition can have both short- and long-term effects on the developing foetus. It is therefore imperative for a mother to consume adequate nutrients in adequate proportions. In order to avoid complications, the mother should be referred to a nutritionist by the gynaecologist to counsel them regarding the importance of maintaining a balanced diet. Further complications in infants can be attributed to preconception underweight or overweight and micro nutrient deficiencies in mothers<sup>3</sup>. The nutritional deficiencies in a mother can have significant implications on the developing dentition and the associated periodontium of a child.

There is a lack of awareness in pregnant women regarding the importance of prenatal counseling and nutrition during the preconception period. Health care professionals are in a position to take initiative and impart knowledge about preconception -pregnancy related nutrition. Discussions regarding healthy eating guidelines, dietary supplement intake and maintenance of healthy weight should be included in the preconception counseling. Educating pregnant mothers about the different aspects of prenatal and postnatal care should be the aim of oral health promotion<sup>4</sup>. Postnatal care includes early referral of the child to pedodontists to prevent diseases and to treat the pre-existing ones if present<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, there is a need for an interdisciplinary collaboration among gynaecologists, pediatricians, nutritionists and pedodontists during preconception, conception and postconception<sup>4</sup>.

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**Keywords:** Child; Mother; Oral Health; Nutrition; Awareness

**How to cite this article:** Thilak N, Rajasekaran S, Bhat SS, Hegde KS, Bhat V.- Baby's smile, mom's happiness PosterJ 2020; 9(1):6.

**Source of support:** Nil.

**DOI:** 10.15713/ins.dpj.028

**Conflict of interest:** None declared

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