Maternal and Infant Health in Genetic Histories of Postcolonial India
Dr. Jerusha Jhirad, MD practicing 1914-1968

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Indian reformers and eugenics

Source: Collection of Dr. Sabera Bhayat
Genetics in Gynecology and Obstetrics

CONGENITAL BIRTH DEFECTS IN REGIONAL MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL, MANIPUR

by

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Introduction

Congenital birth defects are important as a cause of still-births and neonatal deaths, and which also constitute almost the third most frequent cause of death in the neonatal period. One congenital abnormality has the tendency to be associated with another and the presence of an abnormality is partly recognizable in birth defects may be of value in searching for a less obvious internal abnormality. In view of the above, the study of the congenital birth defects is important. Such a study is attempted and carried out in the Regional Medical College Hospital, Manipur for the first time and more so the only one of its kind in the State so far.

In the general population, it is estimated that 7% of all live borns have some type of congenital abnormality of the other; the percentage of incidence is found in the order of 1 in 50 of live births and in 12 carefully performed autopsies.

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In shorted formers, the incidence is even higher and it is higher for internal defects as compared to external defects. Children with congenital malformations who live beyond the neonatal period are incapacitated by the deformities or by disease. Some of the malformations appear more commonly in the male species e.g. cleft palate, alimentary tract abnormalities, ano-rectal anomalies, especially impedaent anus, whereas anomalies of the hip, skeleton and brain show a higher incidence in the female babies. The incidence of congenital birth defects seems to have a definite relation to the maternal age, the highest incidence being over 35 years and lower among mothers in the 25 to 30 years group with a slight increase in very young mothers. Also, congenital birth defects seem to have a predilection for the first pregnancy and from the fifth onwards. In relation to maternal disease, diabetes mellitus doubles the normal incidence. Congenital birth defects may be related to maternal age (certain chondrodystrophies, e.g. achondroplasia). The order of birth may also have a role to play in the incidence of malformations (e.g. first borns: pyloric stenosis, anencephalus etc.,

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