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Factors that facilitate mental development for children

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Abstract

Growth is an increase in the size of the body as a whole or the size attained by specific parts of the body. It is a fundamental characteristic of all living organisms. Healthy growth and development in early life have a profound effect on health across the life span. Research studies over the past decade demonstrated the link between early life events and adult chronic diseases and found that babies born at lower birth weights have an increased risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure in later life. Infants with poor birth outcomes begin life with multiple risk factors that may prevent them from reaching their full health and development potential. Also, children exclusively breast fed had better weight and crown head length (CHL) as compared to those who were on mixed feed. Literacy status of mother and socio economic status were found to play a significant role.

The findings of this scoping review are that factors that are associated with children's cognitive development are parental factors (maternal depressive and anxiety disorder) and child factors (child's condition at birth, stunting, and hemoglobin levels). Factors related to children's emotional mental development are parental factors (family socioeconomic, parenting styles, family mental health, parental education level, and parents' marital conflict), child factors (children's health conditions), and factors. Other (regional characteristics).

Keywords: Growth, gender, feeding pattern, weaning, income, working status, mother's literacy status, birth order, birth spacing, infants, mothers

Introduction

Growth is an increase in the size of the body as a whole or the size attained by specific parts of the body. It is a fundamental characteristic of all living organisms. Growth is a form of motion. Growth means the increase in the size of the various parts and organs of the body by multiplication of cells and intercellular components during the period commencing from fertilization to physical maturity. The increase in number is a function of cell division (mitosis), which involves the replication of DNA and the subsequent migration of the replicated chromosomes into functional and identical cells. Stages of Growth the stages or phases of growth have been classified in different manners by different researchers.

Childhood Nutrition

Breast feeding

It provides a unique nutrient constituting of proteins, carbohydrates and fats needed for optimal cell function and growth. Further, the contents changes to suit the nutrient requirements of child's development with age. Exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age helps in improving health and development of the child. Breastfed babies are less likely to develop obesity and will have lower cholesterol level in their later life. Much effort needs to be emphasizes in early initiation of breastfeeding along with skin to skin contact between mother and baby in order to help in increasing exclusive breastfeeding.

Complementary Feeding

An appropriate and adequate start of complementary feeding at six months is critical for development. In many developing countries, children of these age groups do not receive timely, appropriate and adequate feeding to grow to optimum level. Adding food too soon takes the place of breast milk which results in a low nutrients and increases risk of illness. Feeding young infants requires active care and stimulation where the caregivers need to be responsive to the child.

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Nutrition

Maternal nutrition

Maternal under nutrition is a risk factor for foetal growth restriction and adverse perinatal outcomes. Inadequate intake of good nutrition and mother's poor nutritional status during pregnancy are indicative of intrauterine growth restriction. In developing countries, intrauterine growth restrictions are mainly due to poor maternal nutrition and infections.

Nutrition, maybe the most important of the lot, has the most profound impact on children's healthy growth and development. A balanced diet, rich in vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates, and fats, provides everything that a child's body needs to grow properly. Malnutrition can cause deficiency diseases affecting their growth and development in a major way. On the other hand, overeating can also lead to obesity and many other health problems in the long run such as diabetes and heart-related problems.

Exercise

Children are encouraged to participate in different physical activities as this will help them to gain their muscular strength and put on bone mass. It has been observed that kids who engage in different physical activities, attain developmental milestones on time or sooner.

Parenting Factors

Young children are dependent on the care they receive and their growth depends on the capacity of the caregivers. Lack of personalized care during the early years of life has a devastating effect on the child's health, growth, personality adjustment and cognitive capacity. Language and cognitive development are especially important during first six months to three years of life. Country office of Save the children and Ministry of Education have established Early Childhood Care and Development Centres in the rural areas of Bhutan to maximize the development of young children and to educate the caregiver of their responsibility in nurturing and caring children for healthy development. In addition, Ministry of Health has trained all community health workers on Care for Child Development.

Environmental Factors

The environment is a major factor that plays a crucial role in the development of children and it represents the overall physical and psychological stimulation they receive. The physical surroundings and the geographical conditions of the place the child lives in, his social environment and relationships with family and peers come under the environmental factors that influence early childhood development in a major way.

The prevalence rate of exposure to lead worldwide is 40% and children in developing countries are at higher risk and at least 30 million people in Southeast Asia are exposed to arsenic via drinking water. Infectious diseases in children can affect development through direct and indirect pathway Diarrhoea is particularly prevalent during first 2 years of life due to lack of accessibility to clean water or inadequate.

Hormones

You must be knowing that hormones belong to the endocrine system and influence the various functions of our bodies. Hormones secreted from different glands that are situated in specific parts of our body and control many of

our body functions. The proper functioning of these hormones plays a major role in the normal physical growth and development of the children. If these hormone-secreting glands cannot function properly, children may suffer from growth defects, obesity, behavioral problems, and some other diseases.

Conclusion

Children during early years of age undergo through rapid growth and development that is greatly influenced by above mentioned factors. Exclusive breastfeeding, adequate complementary feeding, stimulation, safe environment and care need to be ensured for optimum physical, mental, social and cognitive development and to prevent to adverse impacts on short-term survival as well as long-term health and development. Children who have a good start in their life will be healthier adults resulting in a better social, economic, and physical and cognition and they live better for their families and their communities and promoting Gross National Happiness of the country. This article is intended to be useful for individual in understanding the factors affecting child growth and development and to prevent adverse effects with adoption of good practices.

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