

I International Symposium "The Early Origin of Adult Mental Health"

XIII Curso Intensivo de Introducción a la Investigación en Neurociencias.

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DR. MICHAEL DEUSCHLE

Profesor y Médico adjunto del Departamento de Psiquiatría y Psicoterapia del *Central Institute of Mental Health of Mannheim* (Alemania).

Jefe del grupo de investigación clínico "*Stress-related disorders*"
Investigador Principal del proyecto POSEIDON.

For a healthy woman, could pregnancy be a risk to develop a depression?

During the pregnancy the rate of depression is not significantly increased; in fact there is a higher risk of depression peri- and postnatally. Especially, postnatal depression is a clinical problem, but the rate of depression during the pregnancy is not increased.

How the mother's depression could affect the intrauterine development of her child? Why?

Well, in case the mother is depressed during pregnancy we have several problems; one problem very simply is mother's appetite. In some cases depression will lead to strong loss of appetite and pregnant mothers may simply don't eat enough.

Also depression is a stress related condition and increased cortisol levels of the mother may pass the placenta and be harmful to the fetus.

Could the antidepressant drugs that the mother needs change the brain of her child?

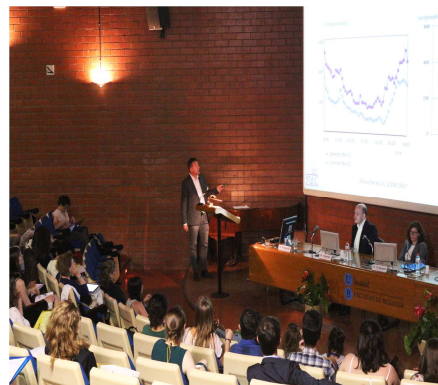
Generally you can treat depression with psychotherapy or with antidepressants. In the case of pregnancy, we try to avoid drugs. In case of very severe episodes of depression, we need antidepressive pharmacological treatment; in that cases we have some drugs,

which might endanger the physical health of the baby by teratogenic actions and we have some drugs that don't present danger to the baby. It is less well studied, whether there are long term behavioral or cognitive effects. At this time, we consider some antidepressants safe. Maternal depression may be harmful to the baby and therefore, in severely depressed pregnant women treatment with specific antidepressants may be beneficial for the infant's health.

very rare cases, these mothers do harm to their infants.

Patricia Barbanoj,
Graduada en Periodismo
Press Assistant at the Symposium

Does postnatal depression have consequences in raising of the child and the mental health of



the baby?

This is a significant problem. Depressed subjects don't fulfil their social role and this is also the case in postnatal depression. Sometimes depressed mothers need support in the care of the newborn. In rare cases of severe or even psychotic depression suicidal ideations might be a problem, but only in