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Children Affected by Parental Alcohol Problems (ChAPAPs)

Literature Overview

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Introduction

This literature overview comprises literature on children affected by parental alcohol problems. It is part of the European Commission funded Project “*Reducing Harm and Building Capacities for Children Affected by Parental Alcohol Problems*”.

The literature was collected via the databases PubMed, ZBmed (Medpilot), PsycInfo, closing the Gap as well as by consulting major journals in the field. The main criterion was the parental diagnosis of alcohol abuse. Further preliminary criteria were the conjunctions of search terms and controlled terms in title and abstract (“Children of Alcoholics”, “problem drinker”, “maternal drinking”, “family problem drinkers”, father drinking”, drinking in the family” “maternal alcohol abuse” “father alcohol”, “parental alcohol”, “alcohol + children + costs”, “COAs + costs”, “alchol + children + prevention”, “alcohol + children + intervention”, “Children of Alcoholics + intervention”, “Children of Alcoholics + prevention”, “alcohol + family + prevention”, “alcohol + family + intervention”).

We constrained the literature search on the years from 1996 to 2008 except for prevention, where we literature is still very scarce. We categorized the literature in six categories: physical damage and development, mental damage and development, other dimensions of development, substance abuse of affected children, Overviews about the ChAPAPs theme and prevention. Each chapter starts with a short overview about the content of the literature category. The list makes no claim to be complete but gives a broad overview of findings in the field of ChAPAPs.

Physical damage and development

This category comprises all studies dealing with consequences of parental alcohol consumption on physical development. Regarding physical damage, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is the most frequently analyzed case in the present studies. FASD is a consequence of maternal alcohol intake during pregnancy. The child is exposed to intoxication as fetus and later on during lactation. FASD is accompanied by growth deficits, negative neuropsychological development and damages of the central-nervous-system. Additionally, less obvious interrelations of parental alcohol problems are described in the literature. Thus, it is proven that ChAPAPs suffer more often from back pain, skin diseases and infectious diseases than non-ChAPAPs do.

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Faden, V.B., Graubard, B.I., Dufour, M. (1997). The relationship of drinking and birth outcome in a US national sample of expectant mothers. *Paediatric and perinatal epidemiology*;11(2):167-80.

Jacobson, S.W. (1997). Assessing the Impact of Maternal Drinking during and after Pregnancy. *Alcohol World: Health and Research*;21(3):199-203.

Larkby, C., Day, N. (1997). The Effects of Prenatal Alcohol Exposure. *Alcohol World: Health and Research*;21(3):192-8.

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Nixon, S.J., Tivis, L.J. (1997). Neuropsychological Responses in COA's. *Alcohol World: Health and Research*;21(3):232-5.

Ozkaragoz, T., Satz, P., Noble, E.P. (1997). Neuropsychological functioning in sons of active alcoholic, recovering alcoholic, and social drinking fathers. *Alcohol (Fayetteville, N.Y.)*;14(1):31-7.

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Rhainds, M., Levallois, P. (1997). Effects of maternal cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption on blood lead levels of newborns. *American journal of epidemiology*;145(3):250-7.

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Gabriel, K., Hofmann, C., Glavas, M., Weinberg, J. (1998). The hormonal effects of alcohol use on the mother and fetus. *Alcohol health and research world*;22(3):170-7.

Guerri, C. (1998). Neuroanatomical and neurophysiological mechanisms involved in central nervous system dysfunctions induced by prenatal alcohol exposure. *Alcoholism, clinical and experimental research*;22(2):304-12.

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Cornelius, M.D., Goldshmidt, L., Taylor, P.M., Day, N.L. (1999). Prenatal alcohol use among teenagers: effects on neonatal outcomes. *Alcoholism, clinical and experimental research*;23(7):1238-44.

Corral, M. M., Holguin, S. R., Cadaveira, F. (1999). Neuropsychological Characteristics in Children of Alcoholics: Familial Density. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*;60:509-13.

Croxford, J., Viljoen, D. (1999). Alcohol consumption by pregnant women in the Western Cape. *South African medical journal = Suid-Afrikaanse tydskrif vir geneeskunde*;89(9):962-5.

Day, N.L., Zuo, Y., Richardson, G.A., Goldschmidt, L., et. al. (1999). Prenatal alcohol use and offspring size at 10 years of age. *Alcoholism, clinical and experimental research*;23(5):863-9.

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Autti-Rämö, I. (2000). Twelve-year follow-up of children exposed to alcohol in utero. *Dev Med Child Neurol.*;42(6):406-11.

Hannigan, J.H., Armant, D.R. (2000). Alcohol in pregnancy and neonatal outcome. *Seminars in neonatology*:SN;5(3):243-54.

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Backstrand, J.R., Allen, L.H., Martinez, E., Pelto, G.H. (2001). Maternal consumption of pulque, a traditional central Mexican alcoholic beverage: relationships to infant growth and development. *Public health nutrition*;4(4):883-91.

Mennella, J. (2001). Alcohol's effect on lactation. *Alcohol research & health : the journal of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*;25(3):230-4.

Rao, K.N., Begum, S., Venkataramana, V., Gangadharappa, N. (2001). Nutritional neglect and physical abuse in children of alcoholics. *Indian journal of pediatrics*;68(9):843-5.

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Carmichael, S.L., Shaw, G.M., Yang, W., Lammer, E.J. (2003). Maternal periconceptional alcohol consumption and risk for conotruncal heart defects. *Birth defects research. Part A, Clinical and molecular teratology*;67(10):875-78.

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O'Callaghan, F.V., O'Callaghan, M., Najman, J.M., Williams, G.M., et. al. (2003). Maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy and physical outcomes up to 5 years of age: a longitudinal study. *Early human development*;71(2):137-48.

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Backstrand, J.R., Goodman, A.H., Allen, L.H., Pelto, G.H. (2004). Pulque intake during pregnancy and lactation in rural Mexico: alcohol and child growth from 1 to 57 months. *European journal of clinical nutrition*;58(12):1626-34.

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Carter, R.C., Jacobson, S.W., Molteno, C.D., Chiodo, L.M., et. al. (2005). Effects of prenatal alcohol exposure on infant visual acuity. *The Journal of pediatrics*;147(4):473-9.

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Seki, M., Seki, M., Seki, M., Yoshida, K., et. al. (2005). A case of fetal alcohol effects with orofacial cleft. *Nihon Arukoru Yakubutsu Igakkai zasshi = Japanese journal of alcohol studies & drug dependence*;40(2):137-43.

Simpson, M.E., Duggal, S., Keiver, K. (2005). Prenatal ethanol exposure has differential effects on fetal growth and skeletal ossification. *Bone*;36(3):521-32.

Stevens, R.G., Cohen, R.D., Terry, M.B., Lasley, B.L., et. al. (2005). Alcohol consumption and serum hormone levels during pregnancy. *Alcohol (Fayetteville, N.Y.)*;36(1):47-53.

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the newborn and altered contractility of umbilical cord artery. *Pediatric research*;61(4): 456-61.

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Spohr, H.L., Steinhausen, H.C. (2008). Fetale Alkohol-Spektrum-Störungen: Persistierende Folgen im Erwachsenenalter. *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*;105(41):M-693.

Troese, M., Fukumizu, M., Sallinen, B.J., Gilles, A.A., et. al. (2008). Sleep fragmentation and evidence for sleep debt in alcohol-exposed infants. *Early human development*;84(9):577-85.

Vahidnia, F., Eskenazi, B., Jewell, N. (2008). Maternal smoking, alcohol drinking, and febrile convulsion. *Seizure: the journal of the British Epilepsy Association*;17(4):320-6.

Mental damage and development

The studies in this category observe the consequences of parental alcohol misuse on mental and psychological development of ChAPAPs. Depressions, anxiety disorders, emotional instability, problems of adjustment, attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity and several phobias were significantly more often found in ChAPAPs compared to non-ChAPAPs. Particularly daughters of alcohol misusing parents are vulnerable to develop eating disorders. Some studies also described moderating factors as a high level of interfamilial cohesion, good communication with parents and a close parent-child attachment.

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Gotham, H.J., Sher, K.J. (1996). Do codependent traits involve more than basic dimensions of personality and psychopathology? *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*;57(1):34-9.

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Alterman, A.I., Bedrick, J., Cacciola, J.S., Rutherford, M.J., et. al. (1998). Personality pathology and drinking in young men at high and low familial risk for alcoholism. *Journal of studies on alcohol*;59(5):495-502.

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Rodríguez Holguín, S., Corral, M., Cadaveira, F. (1998). Visual and auditory event-related potentials in young children of alcoholics from high- and low-density families. *Alcohol Clin Exp Res.*;22(1):87-96.

Stelt, O. van der, Gunning, W.B., Snel, J., Kok, A. (1998). Event-related potentials during visual selective attention in children of alcoholics. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*; 22(9):1877-89.

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Wiers, R. W., Gunning, W. B., Sergeant, J. A. (1998). Is a Mild Deficit in Executive Functions in Boys Related to Childhood ADHD or to Parental Multigenerational Alcoholism? *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*;26(6): 415-30.

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Hannigan, J.H., Armant, D.R. (2000). Alcohol in pregnancy and neonatal outcome. *Seminars in neonatology*:SN;5(3):243-54.

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O'Connor, M.J., Kasari, C. (2000). Prenatal alcohol exposure and depressive features in children. *Alcoholism, clinical and experimental research*;24(7):1084-92.

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Other dimensions of development

Beside physical and mental damages, problems regarding social behavior are described in the literature. Behavioral problems are mainly observed in male ChAPAPs and include aggressive and violent behavior. Regarding own partnerships, studies indicate that ChAPAPs bear a higher risk to repeat negative parental behavior. A high number of children exposed to maternal alcohol misuse during pregnancy show a very low level of self-confidence and self-esteem compared to non-exposed children. Additionally, ChAPAPs have significantly more learning difficulties, reach, by trend, inferior graduations and are leaving school more often than non-ChAPAPs do. This is further enforced by the negative image ChAPAPs have. It was proven, that teachers tend to grade ChAPAPs worse in comparison to non-ChAPAPs, if they know about drinking behaviors of their parents.

The inferior education chances of ChAPAPs lead to worse labor-market outcomes. Moderating factors as a high level of interfamilial cohesion, good communication with parents and a close parent-child attachment can have positive effects on coping skills and social behavior of ChAPAPs.

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Substance abuse of affected children

The high number of studies comprised in this category shows the relevance of own substance abuse of Children growing up in a family with substance abuse history. Misuse of alcohol and other substances is one of the most analyzed topics in ChAPAPs research. ChAPAPs have a considerable higher chance to develop alcohol or substance abuse than non-ChAPAPs of the same age have. The contact to alcoholic beverages generally starts earlier. Some studies analyzed drinking behavior in preadolescents. In Germany, one of seven children grows up with a parent that has a lifetime diagnosis for alcohol related disorders. These children's risk to become addicts is increased up to six fold. More than 30 % of them will have a lifetime diagnosis for alcohol addiction. Regarding drinking behavior, maternal alcohol consumption is associated with a higher chance for ChAPAPs to become alcohol addicted. It is additionally emphasized that many biological, psychological and social factors are also important for the development of alcohol misuse. Coping strategies encouraged by a good interfamilial atmosphere and good communication structures with parents.

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Overviews

More families suffer from the consequences of alcohol abuse than from all other drugs combined. Whilst millions of families within the EU are affected by alcohol problems, it is difficult to give an accurate assessment of its size. Current prevalence estimates show about 28.6 million children of alcoholics in the United States. The number of cases of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in the western world has been estimated at 0.33 cases per 1,000 live births. Children often are not recognized as such and, therefore, are not addressed specifically. Children may be affected by alcohol and other drug use along three primary paths: in utero through the mother's use, environmentally through both family and community influences, and through their own use. Despite the consensus recommending total abstinence during pregnancy, prenatal alcohol exposure remains a major public health issue. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) estimates that 7.62 million babies (18.6%) were exposed to alcohol during gestation. Children who are prenatally exposed, are at risk both through physiological insults and through care giving deficits in their immediate family. Today, research on COAs can be classified into studies of fetal alcohol syndrome, the transmission of alcoholism, psychobiologic markers of vulnerability, and psychosocial characteristics.

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Prevention

Negative health outcomes as a result of parental alcohol abuse are largely known, analyzed and described in the literature. Less is known about prevention of those negative health outcomes in ChAPAPs. The below listed interventions are a collection of mostly direct interventions in ChAPAPs from 1986 to 2007. These studies give an overview of the efforts done in this field in the last years and comprise interventions in children and adolescents and in adult ChAPAPs. Settings include school, universities, internet, family services and families. In many studies, a lack of evaluation of the interventions can be noticed. Further research on evidence proof of the interventions is claimed by some studies.

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