Highlights of Prenatal Education at the School for Parents Varna

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Discussion

According to modern scientists as early as when the egg is fertilized it has a "mind" of its own about whether the pregnancy is wanted or not. Unwanted pregnancy often ends in a miscarriage. Today it is considered proven, that in the womb babies can hear, feel, see, experience and even receive instruction at the elementary level. Prenatal education is performed by the mother in the natural course of pregnancy. It relates to the vital question of the quality of the future generation. The idea of having a live and meaningful connection with the baby in the course of pregnancy has been around for a long time. Modern medical and psychological research prove that the thoughts and emotions of the pregnant wife have a direct bearing on the development of her child, as well as on its self-awareness. The American scientist D. Chamberlain has proven that the brain and feelings of the child are activated much earlier than previously thought. Thomas R. Verny, MD, narrates a very interesting experience in his book "The Secret Life of the Unborn Child: How You Can Prepare Your Baby for a Happy, Healthy Life":

"Pregnant women were asked to lie prone for twenty to thirty minutes on a table under an ultrasound machine. What Dr Reynolds deliberately did not tell them was that when a woman lies like this, her child eventually quiets down and lies still too. As each child relaxed, his mother was only told that the ultrasound screen showed her baby wasn't moving. The terror that information produced was expected and deliberate. Dr Reynolds wanted to see how quickly a mother's fear registered on her child and how he reacted when it did. In every case, the response was swift: Seconds after each woman learned her child was lying motionless, the image on the ultrasound screen began stirring."

The influence of stress and unhealthy way of living on the new generation has often been discussed. More and more parents feel powerless to deal with the education of their children. Few, however, are aware of the "ecology" of intrauterine life. There is conclusive evidence that individual psychological and intellectual development starts with intrauterine development.

Years of scientific studies prove that the child feels happy or unhappy, aggressive or loving, calm or irritable in its successive life, depending on how its mother has felt, what signals it has received from her in the period of its prenatal development, and the palpable presence of the father. The building up of a relationship (bonding) between the child and its parents starts long before its birth. This is the reason why in recent years there have been so many discussions of the different ways of communicating with babies.

Since 1999, as part of the prenatal preparation courses at the School for Parents – Varna, the following techniques for training have been advocated:

1. Firstly, providing the Mother with a calm and harmonious environment. Stress affects adversely the fetus, especially in the early stages of pregnancy, when it can induce a miscarriage. During the 24th week episodic electrical activity of the fetal brain can be registered. This in turn suggests, that in the presence of a reduced oxygen supply to the fetus (which happens when the mother is subjected to strong stress) will adversely affect the brain structure. Pregnant women are recommended to daily stay in the "bed rest" position for at least 15 minutes with their feet above the level of the womb. In this way blood is drained from the lower limbs, and the inflow of blood to the placenta is increased. Avoiding stress factors is desirable, rather than obligatory. Most women confine that it is difficult to attain perfect harmony in pregnancy.

2. Touching and caressing the abdomen of a pregnant woman has a relaxing effect and can soothe the tense uterine muscles, to tone down the womb and prevent the occurrence of untimely contractions. In pregnant women with an intensified womb tonus, caressing is only recommended after a consultation with an obstetrician. Usually pregnant women often feel the need to touch their abdomen themselves, when talking or thinking about the unborn child. Touching and caressing can also be done by the father, and is usually accompanied by the sending of verbal or mental messages.

In a study of 134 pairs, who attended the School for Parents in the August 2011 - January 2012 period, 68 of them (50.7%) report that when caressing and...
touching the abdomen their child reacts with active movements, which are remarkably noticeable.

3. Talking, listening to music, singing are also types of communication between parents and their unborn child, which are often recommended by modern prenatal psychology. During the seventh lunar month the fetus's nervous system is mature enough and all sensory and motor centers are already localized in the brain. The fetus has sensors for touch and pain. It can differentiate the louder external sounds from those, accompanying its intrauterine development. During the 27th week of pregnancy the baby responds to intense external light and can turn its head to face it. Neurologists accept that during the 32nd week after the conception babies demonstrate awareness to what is happening around him. Scanning the baby's brain indicates the presence of periods of rest and activity. Our studies prove that many mothers tend to accept the statement that their unborn child can hear them, when they speak. Around one-third of them share that they talk and sing to it on a daily basis; about 15% do so only every now and then, but not more than 2-3 times a week. However there are still some pregnant women, who do not accept the idea of the prenatal development of senses, and do not communicate with their babies in any form or shape (13.4% - 18 of respondent mothers). Obstetricians, trained in the materialistic medical approach, strongly refuse to accept the presence of fetus consciousness. Their conviction is then transferred to the pregnant women they consult.

4. Recommendations for a safe environment Pregnant women are advised to avoid the direct impact of electromagnetic radiation: computers, TVs, GSM and microwave devices. Science has not yet given its final word on whether those effects are safe for the developing baby. More than half of the pregnant women (67%) claim that they know the dangers of the environment in which they reside and try to avoid them. Unfortunately, 15.6% are aware of the threats, but are unable to eliminate them.

As part of the courses for future parents we offer instruction in meditation, respiratory methods for relaxation and yoga techniques to reduce stress. Films and books are commented, helping the pregnant woman and her family to prepare for their new member. The recommendations to furnish the home beautifully, to find the appropriate scents and colors, both at home and at work, stimulate the future mother to focus her positive thinking on the fetus. Thus a suitable emotional background for the baby’s development is created, and we work towards a constructive intrauterine bonding. Satisfaction from attending the prenatal courses is extremely high. Over 98% of participants provide an assessment of over 5.50 (with 6 being the maximum grade) at the end of the course at the School for Parents in the city of Varna.

References

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