Preventative Effects of Vitamins and Minerals on Early Abortion

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In a collective prospective epidemiological study on 13,643 pregnancies from 1963 to 1975, an attempt was made to explore all accessible factors of possible influence on the course of pregnancy and child development. In particular, drugs taken during the first 3 months of pregnancy were included, a consequence of the thalidomide disaster. A split design was used for the evaluation. In part I, covering 7,870 pregnancies, an exhaustive exploratory analysis was performed searching for possible associations. In part II, these associations were either confirmed or rejected by testing procedures. The questions put to the patients with respect to pharmaceutical preparations included the use of vitamins and minerals. Most of these were combined products, given mostly as general adjuvants. We had no special hypotheses with regard to their influence on the course of pregnancy. Enrollment of women for the study took place in the second or third month of pregnancy. We were therefore able to study the frequency of abortions, especially early abortions, up to the fourth month. Special statistical corrections, including the dates of enrollment, led to comparable rates.

The general finding was that women who had taken vitamins showed reduced rates of early abortions, which were only two-thirds of those in women who had not. Roughly the same difference holds true for the intake of minerals.

Nausea and vomiting are general signs of the normal course of pregnancy. Early bleeding may be an indicator for possible abortion. Women having both symptoms are a high-risk group, and in our study included 14% of all pregnancies and 40% of the abortions. In part I, this group consisted of nearly 1,000 pregnancies with 14.7% abortions. Of 220 women who took vitamins, only 5.5% had early abortions, compared with 16% for those who had not taken such supplements. A similar effect was observed for the intake of
mineral substances, with 6.0% early abortions compared with 15.9% for the nonsupplemented (1). In part II, we confirmed these results with matched pairs. We are thus of the opinion that vitamins and minerals in early pregnancy considerably reduce the risk of early abortion.

**REFERENCE**