

SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN THE HEALTH OF PREGNANT WOMEN IN THE INMA COHORT: EFFECTS IN HABITS AND SELF-CARE DURING PREGNANCY

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Background and aims: The INMA (Childhood and Environment Project) is a multi-centre prospective mother and child cohort study which aims to evaluate the impact of exposure to the most prevalent environmental pollutants on foetal growth and infant development. This communication describes health inequalities on diet, health behaviours and self-caring during pregnancy among 2607 women.

Methods: Pregnant women were recruited at their first routine specialized antenatal care visit (10-13 weeks of gestation) to their health centre in four Spanish areas: Valencia, Sabadell (Catalonia), Asturias and Gipuzkoa (Basque Country). Information on maternal characteristics was collected through two questionnaires completed in the first and third trimester of pregnancy, including socio-demographic data, and variables describing monitoring and care received during pregnancy, as well as diet and life-style. Socioeconomic status (SES) was measured by means of occupation, coded using the four-digit Spanish Classification of Occupations (CNO94), closely related to the international ISCO88 coding system.

Results: The mean age of the women was 30.6 years old (range 15-43), 56.2% were primiparous, 98.9% were married and 8.5% were foreigners. A total of 33.5% had university level education and 47% were from a high occupational class. Women with highest SES reported significantly healthier lifestyle habits and had greater skills for self-care, monitoring and planning their pregnancy, and they had fewer pregnancy-related complications and fewer problems in previous pregnancies. Dietary habits were negatively correlated with maternal SES, with higher intake of protein, carbohydrates, fats and total calories in pregnant women with lower SES. On the other hand, we did not find any statistically significant differences in the intake of dietary supplements. **Conclusions:** Adequate care during pregnancy, apart from monitoring all the usual clinical variables, requires an understanding and consideration of the socioeconomic circumstances of the pregnant woman, which determine her behaviour, habits and self-care during this period.