



**Impact of fetal lead exposure on cord blood
Insulin like growth factor-I levels and
neonatal anthropometric parameters**

Thesis

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pediatrics*

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LIST OF CONTENTS

Title	Page No.
Introduction	1
Aim of the work	3
Review of Literature:	
▪ Sources &Exposure to lead	4
▪ Metabolism of lead in the human body	14
▪ Neonatal anthropometric measurements	19
▪ Insulin-Like growth factor -1 and fetal growth	31
▪ Effect of lead on pregnant women and birth Outcomes	64
Subjects and Methods	72
Results	80
Discussion	95
Summary	102
Conclusions and Recommendations	104
References	105
Arabic Summary	_____

LIST OF TABLES

Tab. No.	Title	Page No.
1:	Other potential Sources of Lead Exposure	13
2:	Classification of Children and Adolescents	28
3:	Genetic Disorders Characterized by Prenatal Growth Deficiency	56
4:	Growth factors and fetal growth	61
5:	Characteristics of mother-infant pairs	80
6:	Comparison between mothers delivered by NVD and those delivered by C.S according to maternal blood lead, cord blood lead and cord serum IGF-1	81
7:	Comparison between male and female according to maternal blood lead, cord blood lead and cord serum IGF-1	82
8:	Comparison between risky and non-risky fathers' job according to maternal blood lead, cord blood lead and cord serum IGF-1	85
9:	Comparison between neonates with maternal blood lead level >10ug/dl and those with maternal blood lead level <10ug/dl according to neonatal anthropometric parameters, and cord serum IGF-1	88

LIST OF TABLES (CONT.)

Tab. No.	Title	Page No.
10:	Correlation coefficient between maternal blood lead levels and neonatal anthropometric parameters, cord blood lead level or cord serum IGF-1	90
11:	Correlation coefficient between cord blood lead levels and neonatal anthropometric parameters or cord serum IGF-1	92
12:	Correlation coefficient between cord serum IGF-1 and neonatal anthropometric parameter	93

List of Figures

Fig. No.	Title	Page No.
1:	Electronic Scaleor	21
2:	Harpenden Infantometer device	23
3:	Head circumference measurement	24
4:	Mid arm circumference Technique	25
5:	Skin fold thickness technique	27
6:	Insulin Like Growth Factor –I	32
7:	The IGF-IR structure	35
8:	The components of the Insulin Like Growth Factor – IGF binding protein – IGF receptor system	39
9:	A Schematic depiction of the GH/ IGF-I axis	41
10:	Intrauterine growth curves	49
11:	Schematic diagram showing the effect of cortisol on the activation of GH-IGF axis in ovine hepatocyte	60
12:	Possible mechanism for the effects of lead on intrauterine growth	69

List of Figures (Cont.)

Fig. No.	Title	Page No.
13:	Comparison between males and females according to cord blood lead level	82
14:	Comparison between males and females according to cord serum IGF-1level	83
15:	Comparison between risky and non-risky fathers' job according to cord blood lead	85
16:	Comparison between risky and non-risky fathers' job according to cord serum IGF-1	86
17:	Comparison between neonates with maternal blood lead level >10ug/dl and those with maternal blood lead level <10ug/dl according to cord serum IGF-1	88
18:	Linear regression analysis showing correlation between maternal Lead and cord Lead	90
19:	Linear regression analysis showing correlation between birth weight and cord serum IGF-1 among the study group	93

List of Abbreviations

AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics
BHSD2	11beta-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase type 2
BLLs	Blood lead levels
BMI	Body mass index
BNF	Brain-derived neurotropic factor
BWT	Birth weight
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CS	Cesarean section
DHEA	Dehydroepiandrosteron
EGF	Epidermal growth factor
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FGF	Fibroblast growth factor
GA	Gestational age
GH	Growth Hormone
HC	Head circumference
HCG	Human chorionic gonadotropin
HGF	Hematopoietic growth factor
IGFBP	Insulin growth factor binding proteins

IGF-I..... Insulin like Growth Factor I
IGF-II Insulin like Growth Factor II
IGF-II Insulin-like growth factor
IGF-IR..... IGF-I receptor
IGFs Insulin like Growth Factors
IUGR Intrauterine growth restriction
KDa..... Kilo Dalton
KXRF In vivo X-ray fluorescence
LGA Large for gestational age
MAC Mid-arm circumference
MBLLs Maternal blood lead levels
NGF Nerve growth factor
NT3 Neurotrophin 3
NVD..... Normal vaginal delivery
Pb Lead
PDGF Platelet-derived growth factor
PTHrP Parathyroid hormone–related protein
SGA Small for gestational age
TGF- α Transforming growth factor α
WHO World Health Organization

Introduction

Lead has been documented to impact a variety of health outcomes including, neurodevelopment (*Bellinger, 2008*), cardiovascular disease (*Navas-Acien et al., 2007*), neurodegenerative diseases and cognitive decline (*Weisskopf et al., 2004*), immune system impairment (*Dietert and Piepenbrink, 2006*), renal system function, and adverse birth outcomes (*Weaver et al., 2009*). Many of these health impacts have been shown to occur at increasingly lower exposures suggesting that there is no ‘safe’ threshold to lead exposure (*Cantonwine et al., 2009*).

The principle routes of external exposure to and intake of lead usually occur through ingestion and inhalation (*Hu et al., 2007*). Lead exposure may affect the fetus in a number of detrimental ways. Because lead is readily transmitted from mother to fetus via the placenta, maternal exposure must be reduced to protect the fetus (*Atabek et al., 2007*).

Insulin-like growth factor (IGF)-1 is a primary mediator of the effects of growth hormone (GH). IGF-1 stimulates systemic body growth, and has growth-promoting effects on almost every cell in the body, especially skeletal muscle, cartilage, bone, liver, kidney, nerves, skin, hematopoietic cell,

and lungs, IGF-1 also regulate cell growth and development (*Delafontaine, 2005*).

High-level occupational lead exposures have been associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes, including intrauterine growth restriction and congenital anomalies (*Gardella, 2001*). A significant relationship was found between birth weight and lead burden in newborns (*Atabek et al., 2007*).

Aim of the Work

The present work aims at studying the impact of fetal lead exposure as reflected by maternal and cord blood lead levels, on cord blood IGF-1 concentration and anthropometric measures at birth in term neonates.

Sources and Exposure To Lead

Lead (pb) is one of the major metals that has gained considerable importance as a potent environmental pollutant (*Flora et al., 2008*).

Although tremendous reductions in lead exposure to the general population have been achieved in most of North America and Europe, worldwide adults and children continue to be exposed to elevated levels through a variety of media and informal sector occupations (*Meyer et al., 2008*).

The environment is still the most common source of exposure to lead, despite the removal or sharp reduction in recent years of some of lead's most pernicious reservoirs. When leaded fuel is burned, lead particles from the exhaust are released into the air, where they can be inhaled or settle into the soil (*Lanphear et al., 2002*).

According to an American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) policy statement on lead exposure in children, from 1976 to 1980 the median blood lead level in U.S. children between one and five years of age was 15 micrograms per deciliter; by 1999, this figure had been reduced to 1.9 micrograms per deciliter (*AAP, 2005*).

Great progress has been made in this effort. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC), the percentage of children between the ages of one and five with blood lead levels of 10 micrograms per deciliter or higher declined from nearly 78% in the mid-1970s to below 5% by the mid-1990s; by 1999-2000, this figure had decreased even further, to just over 2 % (*CDC, 2005*).

Adults showed similarly steep declines in blood lead levels during this period. Usually credited for this improvement were widespread prevention policies instituted by the federal government, especially those banning lead in gasoline and mandating aggressive lead screening in children (*CDC, 2006*).

Lead exposure can be especially detrimental during pregnancy, fetal development, and early childhood. Lead is widely understood to be transmitted from mother to fetus through the placenta, and an animal study done by *Goyer*, found that maternal and fetal blood lead levels were "nearly identical (*Gardella, 2001*).

Lead may also be stored in a person's bones for decades before being released into the blood stream or into soft tissues, there by doing further damage to that person's internal organs, or before being passed to the developing fetus during pregnancy (*Hernandez. et al., 2002*).