Educative actions to promote hydration and rational use of herbal teas in pregnancy and lactation

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Introduction: During pregnancy the body of women undergoes a transformation and develops complex physiological situations, especially in the first trimester. Pregnant women may be at greater risk of dehydration by not drinking water due to nausea and vomiting. Hydration plays a crucial role for the renewal of amniotic fluid, which is the living environment of the fetus. Having said that, educative actions are required to promote maternal and child health.

Objective: Promotion of meetings with pregnant women about healthy habits especially regarding hydration.

Method: The meetings were organized weekly during 2013-2014 in the NGO “Baby on Board”, Araraquara, SP, Brazil.

Results: It was observed that the women began to have a better understanding of the fact that good hydration is fundamental for the growth and development of the placenta and fetal amniotic fluid and that the liquid intake is crucial for the production of milk, being breastfeeding the best form of nutrition for their baby. It was also observed that many women consume herbal teas (as senna, chamomile, lemon grass), replacing the water consumption. However, plants have pharmacological activity and many are contraindicated during pregnancy and lactation, such as senna, that can lead to contractions, abortion, cramps and diarrhoea in infants.

Conclusions: The consumption of teas can be a form of hydration. However, it is extremely important that pregnant and lactating women are informed about the adverse effects of the consumption of herbal teas during pregnancy and lactation. Educational actions are well accepted by women and have positive effects.

Key words: pregnancy, lactation, hydration, tea, herbs.

Dose response effects of water on cognition in children and adults

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Introduction: Water supplementation has been found to facilitate visual attention and short-term memory, but the dose required to improve performance is not yet known.

Objective: We assessed the dose response effect of water on thirst, mood and cognitive performance in both adults and children.

Method: Participants were offered either no water, 25 ml or 300 ml water to drink. Study 1 assessed 32 adults and Study 2 assessed 79 7-9 year old children. In both studies, performance was assessed at baseline, and 20 minutes after drinking (or no drink), on thirst and mood scales, letter cancellation and digit span.

Results: For both children and adults, a large drink (300 ml) was necessary to reduce thirst, while a small drink (25 ml) was sufficient to improve visual attention (letter cancellation). In adults, a large drink improved digit span, but there was no such effect in children. In children, but not adults, a small drink resulted in increased thirst ratings.

Conclusions: Both children and adults show dose-response effects of drinking on visual attention and memory. Visual attention is enhanced by small amounts of fluid and appears not to be contingent on thirst reduction. Memory performance may be related to thirst, but differently for children and adults. These contrasting dose-response characteristics could imply cognitive enhancement by different mechanisms for these two domains.

Key words: drinking, water, cognition, children, adults.

Survey among elderly people related to their fluid intake

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Introduction: Appropriate hydration is a requirement for health. The aim of this study is to evaluate total fluid intake provided by different types of beverages and food in a sample of elderly people living in nursing homes.

Method: Interviews with a questionnaire. The study was carried out between April and June, 2014.

Results: A total of 140 interviews were completed. The people surveyed mostly consider themselves as active as their contemporaries (39%). More than half of seniors never do any sports. More than two-thirds of those surveyed have some kind of illness. Mean total water intake was 1.8 L for men and 1.7 L for women, far away from the “adequate Intake” set by the EFSA, 2.5 L (for adults