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Fetal and Childhood Effects of Children Exposed to Opioids, Opioid Maintenance Therapy (OMT), and Methamphetamine In Utero

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The opioid use epidemic in the U.S. is a well-known growing problem. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, opioid use has increased nationally nearly 400% over the past 18 years
1. Subsequently, Opioid Maintenance Therapy (OMT), methadone or buprenorphine, is expanding2. Additionally, methamphetamine (MA) use and abuse is a continuing problem worldwide. Rates of MA use are high in the U.S. and overseas rates are greater3. Opioid and MA use affects not only the user, but also friends, family, and the communities close to them4,5. A child exposed to opioids, OMT, and MA in utero may have predispositions to numerous health conditions, which is also a significant impact. After an extensive PubMed search, research appears limited on illnesses, health conditions, and ongoing health related to fetal exposure to these substances. There is a lack of sufficient study on the effects of opioid, OMT, and MA use by expectant mothers on fetal and childhood health outcomes. An exhaustive database search and a retrospective epidemiological study may provide a better understanding of the health risk of children exposed to opioids, OMT, and MA in utero.

References:
2. Ibid

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