MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND ISOLATED OROFACIAL CLEFTS IN HUNGARY

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SUMMARY

Aims: To study the role of maternal employment status as indicator of socioeconomic status in the origin of isolated orofacial clefts (OFC) and in the use of periconceptional folic acid/multivitamin supplementation.

Methods: 1,975 cases with OFC (1,374 cases with cleft lip ± palate and 601 cases with posterior cleft palate), 38,151 population controls without any defects and 20,868 patient controls with other isolated defects were compared in the population-based data set of the Hungarian Case-Control Surveillance of Congenital Abnormalities (HCCSCA), 1980–1996.

Results: The proportion of professionals and managerials was lower, while the proportion of unskilled workers, housewives and others was higher in the mothers of cases with OFC compared with the population control group. However, the comparison of OFC and patient control groups did not show any difference in the employment status of mothers. A lower level of folic acid supplementation occurred in the professional and skilled worker mothers of cases with OFC compared with the population control group. This difference was confirmed by the comparison of folic acid used by mothers of cases with OFC compared with patient controls. An infrequent multivitamin use was displayed in the studied groups.

Conclusions: The prevalence of OFC at birth shows a slightly lower maternal employment status as indicator of socioeconomic status than in the population control group. The higher level of maternal education does not imply a higher rate of folic acid supplementation in the group of OFC.

Key words: cleft lip, cleft palate, employment status, folic acid, multivitamins

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