Brief Report

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Investigating the Prevalence and Procedure of Frankincense Use in Pregnant Women Referring to Health Care Centers in Mashhad

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Abstract:

Introduction: A narration by the holy prophet of Islam reads “Feed pregnant women with frankincense so that they will have intelligent and brave children. Frankincense is a plant gum which is obtained from different species of Boswellia. In Islamic and traditional medicine, frankincense has been named as a substance which improves intelligence and memory. Hippocampus is the most important part of learning and memorizing in the brain and frankincense juice, probably by influencing this area, increases the conduction of sensory signals and improves memory. Noting the extensive use of the Islamic and traditional medicine recommendations in the country, in this study, we investigated the use of frankincense in pregnant women referring to health care centers in Mashhad between July, 2005 and October, 2006.

Method: In this cross-sectional survey, 900 pregnant women referring to health care centers in Mashhad were interviewed. The participants were selected through a multi stage sampling procedure. Gestational age of the participants was between 4 to 41 weeks and the mean gestational age of 26.2 weeks. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS software.

Results: 263 (29.2%) pregnant women ate frankincense in order to have intelligent babies. The rate of frankincense use varied from once in the pregnancy period to constant daily use during this period and the mean use was 74.16 days. 60.2% of the participants had high school diploma or higher degrees and 39.8% had degrees lower than high school diploma. In 94.6% of the mothers using frankincense, no side effect was observed and only 5.4% of mothers reported nausea or some slight side effects.

Conclusion: Noting the importance of learning and the constructive role in mental abilities and memory in human success, it is recommended that more complementary research be conducted to determine the effect of frankincense on children’s IQs in case-control studies.

Keywords: Frankincense, Pregnant, Traditional medicine.

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