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Prenatal testing and termination of future pregnancies in Arab mothers of children with severe defects: impact of Moslem cleric or physician on the decision making

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The authors investigated: 1) How many of 250 Israeli Arab mothers (50% in consanguineous marriages) of babies with severe congenital anomalies had undergone prenatal testing during pregnancy, and how many had refused termination of pregnancy (TOP) when recommended; 2) Why TOP had been refused; 3) Attitudes regarding prenatal testing and TOP in future pregnancies; and (4) Whether the women would have changed their decision had they been able to talk to a Moslem cleric or Moslem doctor in addition to the regular personnel. Eighty-seven (35%) refused to even consider TOP, 55 (22%) agreed to undergo TOP, and 87 (35%) agreed provided the procedure would be performed before 120 days gestation. The remainder were undecided. Of 195 women, the addition of a Moslem religious cleric or physician to the Committee would influence 89 (46%) and 55 (28%), respectively, to change their opinion and agree to TOP, and 26 (13%) and 10 (5%), respectively, to change their opinion and agree to TOP prior to 120 days of gestation. The remainder either continued to refuse TOP or were undecided.

Recent publications

1. L Jaber, G Diamond. Why Anemia in infants can't be solved by iron supplementation alone: Notes from the ethnic underground. Arch Community Med Public Health 6 (1), 077-080.
2. L Jaber, N Hamed, ES Grossman, I Berger. Epidemiology and diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in the Arab and Jewish populations in Israel. Arch Community Med Public Health 6 (2), 152-158.
3. G Diamond, L Jaber (2022). Differing Diagnostic Trends in Autism Spectrum Disorders Between Ethnic Groups Reflecting Potential Etiological Risk Factors. Medical Research Archives 10 (8)

Biography

Lutfi A. Jaber is one of the foremost experts in the field of consanguinity and the problems associated with consanguineous marriages. This is still a major problem in many countries in the Middle East and Asia and Professor Jaber has studied it intensively and written many articles about the issue. As a paediatrician, he was a director of a busy pediatric clinic in a large Arab town in Israel and who also worked in the Department of Neurology at a large tertiary children's hospital, he sees first-hand every day the consequences of these marriages as the various illnesses among the children he treats. He is also a Professor in the Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Israel. By teaming up with colleagues in the Department of Genetics at a local tertiary medical center, he also contributes to ongoing research into the genetic conditions that result from consanguineous marriages.

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