

KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF HERBAL DRUGS IN PREGNANCY

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BACKGROUND:

Use of herbal medicine is increasing in Italy, these preparations being generally used as self-medication, often in the wrong belief that "natural" can be equated with "harmless". There is a lack of basic knowledge by both clinicians and patients concerning the indications for use and safety of herbal medicines used in pregnancy and lactation and few studies have assessed the employ of herbal drugs in pregnancy and the risk factors related to this use. Purpose of the study is to investigate the knowledge and the use of the herbal medicine on a group of pregnant, the awareness of the collateral effects and the safety of these preparations in pregnancy, finally to investigate if the phytotherapy is employed as self-medication or as prescribed by a physician. Particularly the investigation has been directed to verify the use in pregnancy of pharmaceutical products containing flavonoids.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

A questionnaire was delivered to a group of 162 pregnant women at the Dpt of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, and Reproductive Medicine, University of Siena. The form was composed by 20 questions that asked both information of general character (age, presence of pathologies, assumption of drugs) and specific information related to the use of herbal drugs.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The age of the women was $30,8 \pm 4,75$ years and the 59 % were primiparae women. The most women were not affected by remarkable pathologies, they did not report allergies and did not assume drugs. The data were inserted in a database and elaborated with a software of statistic analysis. From our questionnaire it emerges that a 37% of women used the herbal medicine as alternative to the traditional medicine, while in Italy non conventional medicine is used just by the 15,6% of population and the percentage for central Italy is 16,3% (1). The 77% of the pregnant believes that this practice is efficacious and the 82% of the patients thinks to continue using it during the nursing if necessary. The 71% of the patients is not informed on the side effects that these products may have, alone or in association to other medicines, in a particularly risky state as pregnancy.

REFERENCES

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