

INTRAUTERINE GROWTH RETARDATION: POTENTIAL CAUSE OF CHRONIC DISEASE

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ABSTRACT

Intrauterine growth retardation (IUGR) refers to the growth rate of a fetus that is less than normal for the growth potential. As one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity, intrauterine growth retardation has immense implications for the short term and long term growth of children. It is an important public health concern in developing countries. Various maternal, placental, neonatal, genetic and environmental factors lead to IUGR and babies with low birth weight. Maternal nutrition, pathophysiological and life style factors are leading causal factors of growth retardation in the uterine life of fetus which develops a bridge towards chronic diseases through an irreversible change in the programming during intrauterine life. These changes result in the distribution of cell types, hormonal feedback, metabolic activity and organ structure and ultimately lead to birth of infants with low birth weight. These infants are more likely to develop chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and neurodevelopment diseases in their adult life.

KEYWORDS: Intrauterine Growth Retardation (IUGR), Programming, Chronic Diseases