

ABSTRACT

A Case Control Study of Factors Associated with Congenital Syphilis

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Congenital syphilis now occupies a high priority as a public health concern.

In 1994, a case control study was conducted to elucidate factors associated with congenital syphilis. Cases (n=61) and controls (n=61) were obtained from the Bustamante Hospital for Children, Victoria Jubilee Hospital and the University Hospital of the West Indies.

Data collection was done by hospital records review. Results indicate that mothers of cases were more likely to be unmarried ($p < 0.005$), unemployed and unskilled ($p < 0.03$). The time of mother's first antenatal visit ($p < 0.03$) and, the type of health care facility where antenatal service was sought, were significantly associated with congenital syphilis ($p < 0.0001$).

Cases were predominantly from the parish of Kingston & St. Andrew and were more likely to have been of low birth weight, less than 2.5 kilograms ($p < 0.0001$). As expected, cases were significantly associated with mothers who were positive for syphilis ($p < 0.0001$).

Recommendations are to develop strategies for reduction in the vulnerability of the "at risk" population as well as promotion of early antenatal attendance of pregnant females thereby facilitating early treatment of maternal syphilis.