



## Letter to the Editor

### Response to “Causal connection between methamphetamine and neurotoxicity not established”

Dear editor

We appreciate the letter by Medina-Kirchner and Torres [1]. Their suggestions improve the interpretation of our case.

We reported a case of a newborn with neurological deterioration during the perinatal period. The maternal exposure to methamphetamines (MTA), led us to differentiate a possible MTA toxicity from a typical perinatal asphyxia.

We speculated that both neurologic and hepatic MTA related toxicity worsened the neurological status [2,3]. In fact, in our patient the cerebral damage was due to the effect of the perinatal asphyxia and the cerebral bleeding secondary to the severe coagulopathy, as confirmed by neuroimaging.

Adverse effects in newborns prenatally exposed to illegal drugs have been largely reported. Its use during pregnancy should be avoided to healthy development. As correctly reported, many factors exacerbate the risk for poor developmental outcomes [1,4,5]. In our case the mother had good family context, she reported only occasional exposure to MTA, no other abuse substance, neither alcohol have been found in the toxicology test. Aim of our case was to report the possibility of adverse effects even in newborns occasionally exposed to MTA. We don't want to blame or criminalize the women already marginalized. However, due to the increase in the number of young MTA-users women, we hope that widespread data about neonatal toxicity could induce the public health expert and the users to avoid and limit its use during pregnancy.

Moreover, we recommend to pay close attention to the effects of the prenatal MTA exposure to early recognize the symptoms, treat them and limit its effects. We believe that the precocious interventions, both in the patient and in the family care, could influence and limit the long-term effects.

To our knowledge this is the first case of neurological and hepatic toxicity in a newborn prenatally exposed to MTA, further studies are needed to confirm our hypothesis and to evaluate the long-term outcome.

### References

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Eugenia Maranella  
Neonatology and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit,  
San Salvatore Hospital, L'Aquila, Italy  
E-mail address: [Eugenia.maranella@gmail.com](mailto:Eugenia.maranella@gmail.com)

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