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Role of nutrition and stimulation in infant brain development: An evidence based review

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Genes provide the blueprint for brain development but the environment shapes it. Nutrition in first 1000 days (Maternal nutrition and the child's nutrition in the first two years of life) are crucial factors in a child's neurodevelopment and lifelong mental health. The brain development is influenced by genetics (non-modifiable) and environment-and that there is an early window of opportunity to provide the nourishment, stimulation and security children need for their brains need to develop fully-and to help fulfill their own potential. In gestation and infancy, the brain is an 'energy hog', consuming between 50 and 75 per cent of all the energy absorbed by the body from food, including fats, proteins, vitamins and minerals. Inadequate nutrition, during that period affects the structure and functions of the brain in ways that are difficult to offset later. Although all nutrients are necessary for brain growth, key nutrients that support neurodevelopment include protein, specific fats (e.g LCPUFA), glucose, iron, iodine, zinc, choline, folate, vitamins A, D, B6 and B12. Failure to provide key nutrients during this critical period of brain development may result in lifelong deficits in brain function despite subsequent nutrient repletion. Early stimulation and interaction with parents and caregivers jump start the journey of brain development and a lifetime of learning.

Biography

Surajeet Kumar Patra has completed his MD at Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi and University of Delhi, India. He has published 27 papers in reputed International journals and has participated in more than 15 international and national conferences as a Speaker and also won many awards. Currently, he has been associated with RB Health in Medical Affairs.

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