



INFANCY

(PERIOD OF THE NEWBORN)

Characteristics of Infancy

1. Infancy is the Shortest of all Developmental Periods

- time when the fetus must adjust to life outside the uterine walls of the mother where it has lived for approximately 9 months.

According to:

- Medical criteria - adjustment is completed with the fall of the umbilical cord from the navel.
- Physiological criteria - completed when the infant has regained the weight loss after birth.
- Psychological criteria - completed when the infant begins to show signs of

Periods of Infancy

- **Period of Parturient**

- from birth to 15 to 30 mins after birth
- when the fetal body has emerged from the mother's body and last until the umbilical cord has been cut and tied

- **Period of Neonate**

- from the cutting & tying of the umbilical cord to approximately the end of the 2nd week of postnatal life.

2. Infancy is a Time of Radical Adjustments

- ❖ birth is merely an interruption of the developmental pattern that started at the moment of conception
- ❖ graduation from internal to an external environment. Like all graduations, it requires adjustment or the individuals part
 - ❑ Temperature changes
 - ❑ Breathing
 - ❑ Sucking and swallowing
 - ❑ Elimination

3. Infancy is Plateau of Development

- ❖ Growth and development suddenly stops at birth
- ❖ Slight regression, such as loss of weight, tendency to be less strong & healthy than at birth
- ❖ Due to necessity for making radical adjustments

4. Infancy is a Preview of Later Development

- ❖ Like a preface of a book
- ❖ A rough draft undergoing rapid revision

5. Infancy is Hazardous Period

- ❖ Physically
- ❖ Psychologically



Conditions Influencing Adjustment to Postnatal Life

1. Prenatal Environment

2. Kind of Birth

a) Natural or Spontaneous Birth

b) Breech Birth

c) Transverse Birth

d) Instrument Birth

e) Caesarian Birth

3. Experiences Associated with Birth

- a) Mother's medication during birth process
- b) Ease or difficulty with which infants starts to breathe

4. Length of Gestation Period

- a) Premature
- b) Post mature

5. Parental Attitudes

- ❖ Favorable and unfavorable maternal and paternal attitudes
- ❖ Preparation for parental duties, the childbirth experience, mother's physical condition after childbirth, concern about expenses, evidence of defects, infant's postnatal adjustment, infantile crying, parental resentments, concern about normality. concern about

6. Postnatal Care

- ❖ The amount of attention infants receive to ensure that their need will be met satisfactorily and relatively promptly
- ❖ The amount of stimulation they receive from the time of birth
- ❖ The degree of confidence

Characteristics of the Infant

1. Physical Development

- ❖ Size – average infant weighs 7 ½ lbs & measure 19 ½ inch. in length
- ❖ Infantile Features
 - a) Muscles are soft, small & uncontrolled
 - b) Bones are flexible because they are composed chiefly of cartilage and gristle
 - c) Skin is soft and often blotchy
 - d) Flesh is firm and elastic
- ❖ Physical Proportion

2. Activities of the Infant

- Mass and Specific activities
- Reflexes
- Generalized responses

3. Vocalization of the Infant

- Crying
- Explosive sounds

4. Sensitiveness of the Infant

- ❖ Newborn are far from blind but their visual field is about one-half that of adults. The ability to follow moving objects occurs during the first week of life (horizontal movement first then vertical movements).
- ❖ Hearing improves within the first three or four days after birth as the amniotic fluid drains from the middle ear.
- ❖ Cells for smell are well developed at birth.
- ❖ Infant's sense of taste is keen.
- ❖ Sensitivity to hunger is fully developed at birth and hunger contractions occur within the first day of life. Thirst also appears then.
- ❖ Sense organ for touch, pressure and temperature are well developed at birth and lie close to the surface of the skin.

5. State of Consciousness

- Not entirely aware or conscious of what goes on around them for the first day or two after birth

6. Capacity for Learning

- Newborn infants are often incapable of even the simplest form of learning

7. Emotions of the Newborn

- Pleasantness - relaxing their body
- Unpleasantness - tensing the body

8. Beginnings of Personality

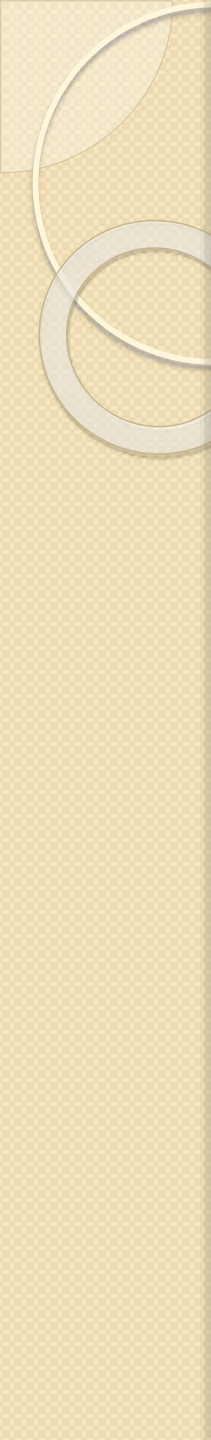
- Results from the maturation of hereditary traits

Hazards of Infancy

- One of the most hazardous periods in the life span

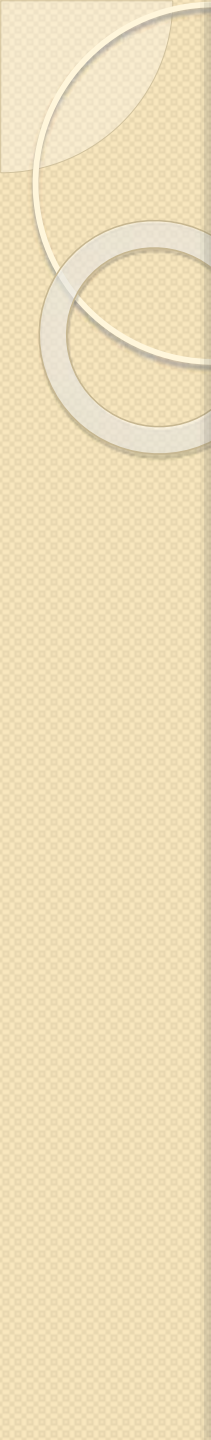
1. Physical Hazards

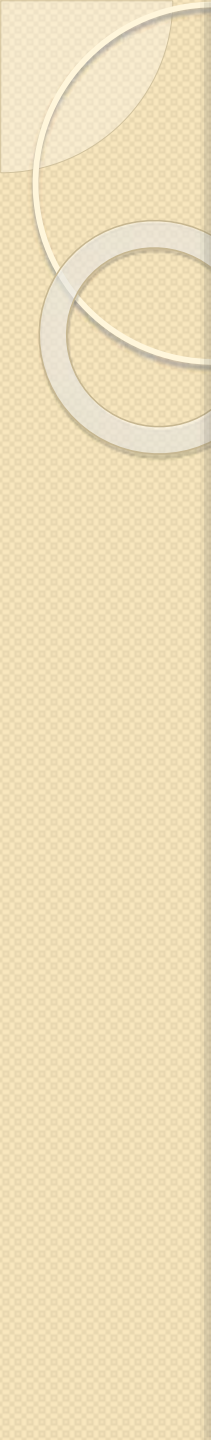
- ❖ **Unfavorable Prenatal Environment**
 - prolonged and intense maternal stress, for example, may cause the infant to be tense and nervous
- ❖ **Difficult and Complicated Birth** – frequently results in temporary or permanent brain damage
- ❖ **Multiple birth** – usually smaller and weaker than singletons as a result of crowding during the prenatal period

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- ❖ **Post maturity** – hazardous only when the fetus becomes so large that the birth requires the use of instruments or surgery; may also experience neonatal adjustments problem
 - ❖ **Prematurity** – causes more neonatal deaths than any other conditions
 - ❖ **Infant Mortality** – the most critical times for death during the period of infancy are the day of birth (2/3 of all neonatal deaths occur) and

2. Psychological Hazards

- ❖ **Traditional Beliefs about Birth** – difficult births are believed to result in “difficult children”
- ❖ **Helplessness** – it may be appealing while, to most, it is frightening. Parents wonder if they are capable of assuming the care of their newborn, and this, in turn, makes them nervous and anxious.
- ❖ **Individuality of the Infant** – to most adults, being difficult is interpreted as being inferior

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- ❖ **Developmental Lag** – source of concern to parents and, as such, affects the way they handle the infant's needs
 - ❖ **Plateau in Development** – makes parents believe their infant is delicate and requires extra care, attention and over protectiveness; weakens parents' confidence in the ability to assume full care of the infant; deprive the infant on one of the essentials of development, the stimulation of the different areas of the body

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- ❖ **New Parent Blues** – states of depression among new parents
 - ❖ **Unfavorable Attitudes of the Part of Significant People** – as the birth draws nearer and significant people become increasingly aware of the new responsibilities they will have to face
 - ❖ **Names** – became hazardous only if they cause the children embarrassment or sometimes even humiliation, if their friends think their names are “funny” or regard them as