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Fish diet in pregnancy bolsters child's intelligence

(IANS)

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LONDON - Babies born to women who ate more fish during pregnancy scored higher in verbal intelligence and fine motor skill tests and also fared better socially.

The study, which presented these findings, was conducted under the auspices of the NUTRIMENTHE project (Effect of diet on offspring's cognitive development), coordinated by Cristina Campoy Folgoso, paediatrics professor at the University of Granada in Spain.

Fish oil is the primary source of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids as docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), the main component of brain cell membranes, the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition reports.

The European Commission has confirmed and supports the healthy effects of DHA as "it contributes to the normal development of the brain and eye of the fetus and breastfed infants", said Folgoso, according to a Granada statement.

NUTRIMENTHE project is focused on the effects that genetic variants and maternal fish intake have on the offspring's intellectual capacity.

The findings are based on an analytical study of blood samples from 2,000 women at 20 gestational weeks and from the umbilical cord of the infant at birth and concentrations of long-chain fatty acids of the series omega-3 and omega-6.

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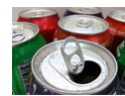
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