HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE AND BEHAVIOUR OF TRIPLETS IN ADOLESCENT AGE

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Background: High order multiples are a population at risk for long-term developmental problems. Little is known about health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and behavioural characteristics of survivors of triplet birth.

Aims: To assess the HRQoL and behaviour of a regional cohort of triplets in adolescent age compared to gestational age-, birth weight- and sex-matched singletons.

Methods: 54 triplets [25 females, mean (SD) gestational age and birthweight 32.0 (2.4) weeks, 1580 (450) grams] of 19 sets and 51 gender-, gestational age- and birth weight-matched coeval singleton controls were examined at a mean (SD) age of 14.2 (0.9) years. Self-rated and parents reports of HRQoL were measured by the Kidscreen 52, and behaviour was assessed by the Achenbach's Child Behavioural Check List parents' (CBCL) and teachers' (TRF) report form.

Results: On average, self- and parent-rated HRQoL was similar in both groups except for the dimensions 'Mood and emotions', 'Autonomy', and 'School environment', which were higher in triplets. Average CBCL global scales ('Internalising-', 'Externalising- and 'Total behaviour problem') and TRF 'Internalising behavior problem' scale were significantly lower in triplets compared with controls. Compared with community norms both HRQoL and behaviour measures in triplets were in normal range. Multivariate analysis showed that socio-demographic factors influenced outcome stronger than perinatal-medical factors.

Conclusions: HRQoL and behavioural outcome in triplets at adolescent age is satisfactory and in many aspects better than in matched singleton controls. Socio-demographic factors play a major role in the prediction of long term outcome of these children.