Positive Thinking May Aid Mentally Ill Alcohol Abusers

**Articles by Betsy Bates**
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**Santa Barbara, Calif.** — Enhancing positive thinking may be the best way to help severely mentally ill alcohol abusers achieve abstinence, according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the Research Society on Alcoholism.

In an interview, Dr. Bailey explained that first-trimester exposure has the potential to affect global development of the fetus, possibly resulting in physical deformities, major cognitive impairment, and diminished growth.

In the third trimester, higher order functions are most affected. "It’s a time for fine-tuning in pregnancy," she said. Alcohol exposure during this time appears to affect children’s specific attention problems as assessed by teachers.

In a logistic regression analysis, third-trimester exposure to cocaine, cigarettes, or alcohol during the first or second trimesters failed to independently correlate with later attention problems in children.

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Environmental influences also contribute to such problems, but third-trimester alcohol exposure remains a strong correlate even after application of statistical controls for those factors. "I think this study in particular makes it clear that it’s never too early to quit," Dr. Bailey said. "If at any point in pregnancy a woman can reduce her alcohol consumption or quit, there is still benefit."