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LOTUS BIRTH®: OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Foreword - Lotus Birth® is the way of birth in which the umbilical cord is not severed but the physiological separation of the placenta from the newborn is awaited at varying times.

Aim of the study - To collect data on the health status of Lotus babies cohort reported in the Birth Register of Lotus Birth® Italia website. At the time of conclusion of the study, 1152 births were registered, which, it is estimated, represent only a part of the Italian reality.

Materials and Methods - The study is based on the completion of a structured questionnaire by telephone interview to the mothers of 505 children randomly extracted from the database. The only criterion for inclusion in the study was clamping time of more than 48 hours or spontaneous separation of the placenta from the infant. Biographical data, anamnestic response and clinical news of individual children and mothers, and subjective considerations were asked. No one refused to participate in the study.

Results - Data from 505 births that occurred in Italy from January 2005 to March 2020 were processed. These were full-term infants from spontaneous delivery (489 cases) and from cesarean section (16 cases). They were subdivided by age, geographic area, place of delivery (at home/maternity home 70.4%, in hospital 29.6%). The 482 spontaneous umbilical cord detachments occurred on average 3–4 days after birth, in 23 cases the severance occurred after 48 hours. From a strictly neonatological point of view, there were no hospitalizations of infants at birth and in the first week of life. There was one hospitalization at 12 days of life for a febrile bacterial infection with favorable outcome and complete recovery; there was one hospitalization for viral infection with clinical picture of bronchiolitis at 30 days of life with favorable outcome and complete recovery. There were no hospitalizations of mothers. There was a significantly lower frequency of acute and chronic diseases (e.g., bronchospasm/asthma 9 cases out of 434 children (2%) in the age group 6 months–15 years) compared with the statistics of the pediatric population born with the current modalities of hospital delivery.

Conclusions- Lotus Birth® is the prevalent choice of couples living in Northern Italy and with mothers who have medium to high education. The Lotus experience has been positively experienced and the mothers declare themselves willing to repeat it and recommend it. Subjective considerations show children who tend to be extroverted, relaxed and able to regulate themselves emotionally, at ease in social relationships, independent. Both motor and cognitive development is normal and learning ability is good and often very good. **No children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders were found.** The neonatal period did not present difficulties and breastfeeding had an easy start and lasted on average for many months. At the fall of the funiculus, the umbilicus was, in the vast majority of cases, closed and healed. These are children who, even in growth, do not tend to get sick easily and appear rather resilient. This study makes it possible to present the first Italian data, pending further investigation.

Warning: Lotus Birth® is incompatible with neonatal cord blood collection and retrieval procedures for autologous or heterologous cryopreservation.

Keywords: pregnancy, lotus, lotus birth, placenta, umbilical cord, clamping, birth, childbirth, full birth, newborn, resuscitation, baby, autism, navel, stem cells, ECMO, EXIT