

Myths and cultural beliefs about Cleft lip and palate still occur even in the 20th Century

Tokunbo Abigail Adeyemi
University of Manchester, UK

Background: Though the cause of cleft lip and palate (CL/P) remains largely unknown evidence based research in most developed countries shows a strong association of cause and effect of CL/P with genetics, environmental factors, nutritional deficiency, smoking, alcohol, drug misuse. It would be assumed that folklores on CLP will not be as popular as it was many years ago. Despite the increase in knowledge and widespread access to medical care beliefs contrary to science still occurs in most developing countries. A narrative review of literature was conducted to identify myths and cultural beliefs associated with cause of Cleft lip and Palate.

Methods: A literature review of databases and websites up to 2012 on folklore, myths and cultural beliefs surrounding Cleft lip and palate was carried out, 18 studies met the inclusion criteria. Data extracted followed the following format; study design, causal attributions and beliefs, country of origin, sample characteristics, sample size and year of publication.

Results: Causal attributions were grouped by category and represented as environment, self-blame, supernatural, chance, unknown, or other. In developing countries, superstitious beliefs such as witchcraft, gods and retribution were still attributed as possible causes of Cleft Lip and Palate. While in developed countries, maternal impression, mechanical causes and folklore were attributed as possible causes of Cleft lip and Palate.

Conclusion: Medical education can help allay fears and correct misinformed belief.

Biography

Abigail Adeyemi is a senior lecturer in Orthodontics at the University College Hospital Ibadan, Nigeria. She is currently doing a PhD research degree in orthodontics at the University Of Manchester, United Kingdom. She is an experienced orthodontist with a wealth of experience in teaching and research and has about 25 publications in peer reviewed journals.

abigailadeyemi@yahoo.com