

Prenatal exposure to androgens as a factor of fetal programming La exposición prenatal a andrógenos como factor de reprogramación fetal

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Both epidemiological and clinical evidence suggest a relationship between the prenatal environment and the risk of developing diseases during adulthood. The first observations about this relationship showed that prenatal growth retardation or stress conditions during fetal life were associated to cardiovascular, metabolic and other diseases in later life. However, not only those conditions may have lasting effects after birth. Growing evidence suggests that prenatal exposure to steroids (either of fetal or maternal origin) could be another source of prenatal programming with detrimental consequences during adulthood. We have recently demonstrated that pregnant women with polycystic ovary syndrome exhibit elevated androgen levels compared to normal pregnant women, which could provide an androgen excess for both female or male fetuses. We have further tested this hypothesis in an animal model of prenatal androgenization, finding that females born from androgenized mothers have a low birt