The Prevalence and Prevention of Allergic Diseases in Postmature Infants Born to Mothers With Covid-19 Infection During Pregnancy

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Abstract: This comprehensive study investigates the prevalence, clinical features, immunological mechanisms, and contributing factors of allergic diseases in postmature infants born to mothers who had contracted COVID-19 during pregnancy. In addition, it evaluates preventive and prophylactic strategies to reduce the risk of allergic manifestations in this vulnerable population. Allergic diseases, including atopic dermatitis, food allergies, urticaria, and bronchial asthma, are increasingly recognized as a major health concern in early infancy, particularly among postmature neonates whose immune, respiratory, and integumentary systems are not fully matured. These immaturities predispose the infant to heightened sensitivity to environmental, dietary, and microbial allergens, increasing the risk of both immediate and delayed hypersensitivity reactions.

The study was conducted at the Pediatric Clinics of the Faculty of Pediatrics, Tashkent State Medical University, over a period from 2022 to 2024. A total of 120 postmature infants were enrolled, divided equally into two groups: 60 infants born to mothers with confirmed COVID-19 infection during pregnancy (study group) and 60 infants born to healthy mothers without a history of COVID-19 (control group). Infants were prospectively monitored from birth until 12 months of age, employing a comprehensive set of clinical, laboratory, and immunological evaluations. These included complete blood counts with eosinophil quantification, total and specific IgE levels, skin prick and patch testing for common allergens, and detailed maternal and neonatal anamnesis, covering prenatal health, infection history, medications, feeding practices, and family allergy history.

Findings revealed that the prevalence of allergic diseases in the study group was approximately 40% compared to 20% in the control group, indicating a twofold increase in infants born to COVID-19 affected mothers. The most frequently observed conditions were atopic dermatitis (25%), food allergies (16.6%), and bronchial asthma (13.3%). Laboratory analysis indicated significantly elevated total IgE levels and eosinophil counts in the study group, suggesting a hyperactive immune response. Skin allergy testing revealed that 60% of infants in the study group exhibited sensitization to one or more allergens, compared to 25% in the control group. Additional risk factors identified included shortened duration of breastfeeding, maternal antibiotic exposure during pregnancy, early environmental allergen exposure, and maternal comorbidities.

The study emphasizes the importance of maternal health management during pregnancy, including preventive measures against COVID-19, nutritional optimization, and avoidance of unnecessary medications. Postnatally, prolonged breastfeeding, use of probiotics and prebiotics, maintenance of hygienic home environments, early allergen avoidance, and regular clinical monitoring are recommended to mitigate allergic disease development. These findings are consistent with international research highlighting the impact of maternal viral infections on fetal immune programming and the subsequent risk of allergy in early life.

This research provides a valuable reference for pediatricians, neonatologists, immunologists, and public health practitioners. It underscores the need for evidence-based preventive strategies, early clinical interventions, and public health policies to reduce the incidence and severity of allergic diseases in postmature infants born to mothers with a history of COVID-19. Furthermore, it

contributes to a growing body of literature regarding the long-term implications of prenatal viral infections on child health and supports the development of targeted immunomodulatory and nutritional interventions. The study advocates for the integration of maternal-infant health monitoring programs, allergy prevention protocols, and educational campaigns to enhance awareness of allergy risk and early intervention strategies.

Keywords: COVID-19, postmature infants, allergic diseases, immune system development, atopic dermatitis, food allergy, bronchial asthma, maternal infection, prenatal exposure, breastfeeding, probiotics, prebiotics, immunoglobulin E (IgE), eosinophilia, neonatal immunity, allergy prevention, hygiene, environmental allergens, early intervention, pediatric health, maternal health, immune dysregulation, epigenetic factors, microbiota, cytokines, inflammation, respiratory health, skin barrier function, neonatal care, clinical monitoring, longitudinal study, preventive strategies, maternal-fetal health, immune sensitization, postnatal development, infant nutrition, public health, immune modulation, allergy screening, pediatric guidelines, immunoprophylaxis

Introduction.

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, has profoundly impacted global public health, affecting millions of individuals worldwide. Pregnant women, as a biologically vulnerable group, are particularly susceptible to severe disease outcomes due to the immunological adaptations required for pregnancy. During gestation, the maternal immune system undergoes significant modulation to tolerate the semi-allogenic fetus while maintaining defense against pathogens. Disruption of these delicate immune processes by viral infections, such as COVID-19, can have downstream effects on fetal immune development, predisposing the neonate to immunological dysregulation, including an increased risk of allergic diseases.

The transplacental transfer of maternal antibodies, primarily IgG, plays a crucial role in passive immunity for the developing fetus. COVID-19 infection during pregnancy can alter the quantity and quality of maternal antibodies, leading to incomplete or skewed immune protection. This immune imbalance may affect thymic development and T-cell maturation in the fetus, increasing susceptibility to allergic sensitization after birth. Postmature infants (born after 41 weeks of gestation) are particularly at risk, as their immune, respiratory, and integumentary systems are not fully mature. Immature skin barrier function, particularly in the stratum corneum, allows increased allergen penetration, contributing to the pathogenesis of atopic dermatitis and other hypersensitivity reactions.

Allergic diseases, including atopic dermatitis, food allergies, and bronchial asthma, are multifactorial in origin. They result from a complex interplay between genetic predisposition, environmental exposures, and early-life immunological influences. Recent evidence suggests that prenatal exposure to maternal infections, including SARS-CoV-2, can epigenetically program fetal immune cells, altering cytokine responses and skewing T-helper cell differentiation toward a pro-allergic phenotype. Additionally, maternal antibiotic use, alterations in the maternal microbiome, and environmental pollutants may exacerbate the risk of postnatal allergic disease.

Breastfeeding is a critical factor in postnatal immune protection. Breast milk provides essential immunomodulatory components, including secretory IgA, lactoferrin, cytokines, and human milk oligosaccharides, which promote gut microbiota maturation, tolerance induction, and modulation of inflammatory responses. Disruption of breastfeeding due to maternal COVID-19 infection—whether from illness severity, hospitalization, or fear of viral transmission—may deprive the infant of these critical protective factors, increasing susceptibility to allergic sensitization and infection.

Environmental exposures during early life are equally significant contributors to the development of allergic diseases. Household allergens such as dust mites, pet dander, and molds, combined with urban air pollutants, dietary antigens, and exposure to processed foods, can trigger and exacerbate hypersensitivity reactions. The postmature infant's underdeveloped immune and barrier systems further amplify this vulnerability, making preventive strategies essential for long-term health outcomes.

Globally, epidemiological studies demonstrate rising rates of allergic diseases in children, with early-life exposures and maternal health status as major determinants. Infants born to mothers who experienced COVID-19 during pregnancy represent a high-risk population. Understanding the frequency, clinical features, and contributing factors of allergic diseases in this group is crucial for developing targeted preventive measures. Biomarkers such as serum total and specific IgE, eosinophil counts, and skin prick test results, alongside clinical monitoring of growth, skin integrity, and respiratory function, are valuable tools for early detection and intervention.

Preventive strategies should integrate immunological, nutritional, and environmental considerations.

Promoting breastfeeding, ensuring proper maternal nutrition, supplementing with probiotics and prebiotics to support gut microbiota, implementing allergen avoidance, and maintaining strict hygiene standards are all effective interventions. In addition, public health education on maternal infection prevention, vaccination, and the benefits of early allergy screening can reduce the incidence and severity of allergic diseases in postmature infants.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of allergic disease prevalence, clinical manifestations, and predisposing factors in postmature infants born to mothers who contracted COVID-19 during pregnancy. By examining immunological, nutritional, and environmental influences, the research seeks to develop evidence-based preventive strategies and recommendations to mitigate the risk of allergic diseases in this vulnerable population. Ultimately, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of early-life immunological programming, the role of maternal health in infant immune development, and the mechanisms linking maternal COVID-19 infection to postnatal allergy risk.

Materials and Methods

This study was designed as a prospective cohort investigation conducted at the Clinical Base of the Faculty of Pediatrics, Tashkent State Medical University, between 2022 and 2024. The research aimed to examine the prevalence, clinical manifestations, and risk factors of allergic diseases in postmature infants born to mothers who had contracted COVID-19 during pregnancy. A cohort design was chosen because it allows for longitudinal observation of infants, monitoring immune system development, clinical symptoms, and laboratory markers over the first 12 months of life, which is critical for detecting early allergic manifestations.

Study Population

The total sample comprised 120 postmature infants (gestational age ≥41 weeks), divided into two groups:

1. Experimental Group: 60 infants born to mothers who had confirmed COVID-19 infection during pregnancy. Maternal infection status was verified using PCR and serological tests, and clinical severity was categorized based on WHO criteria. 2. Control Group: 60 infants born to healthy mothers with no history of COVID-19 or other significant infections during pregnancy.

Both groups were matched by sex, gestational age, and socioeconomic background to reduce confounding variables. Inclusion criteria required that infants had no major congenital malformations or chronic diseases other than potential allergic manifestations. Exclusion criteria included premature birth (<41 weeks), congenital immunodeficiencies, or maternal chronic autoimmune diseases.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures were approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee of Tashkent State Medical University. Informed consent was obtained from the parents or legal guardians of all participating infants. Data privacy, confidentiality, and ethical handling of biological samples were strictly observed according to international guidelines.

Data Collection

Data collection involved a combination of clinical assessment, laboratory testing, and parental interviews. A structured protocol was developed to ensure uniformity in the recording of variables.

1. Maternal and Neonatal History:

➢ Maternal age, parity, and obstetric history

➢ Severity and timing of COVID-19 infection during pregnancy

➢ Medication use, including antibiotics, antivirals, and supplements

➢ Duration and exclusivity of breastfeeding

➢ Maternal nutrition and lifestyle factors

2. Infant Monitoring:

➢ Birth weight, length, head circumference, and APGAR scores

➢ Growth and developmental milestones at 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12 months

➢ Skin assessment for atopic dermatitis, urticaria, and other lesions

➢ Respiratory evaluation, including wheezing, coughing, and asthma symptoms

➢ Gastrointestinal and food allergy manifestations

3. Laboratory Investigations:

➢ Total and specific IgE levels: Measured at birth and at 6 and 12 months using enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA)

➢ Eosinophil counts: Determined through complete blood count with differential

➢ Skin prick tests and patch tests: Conducted from 6 months onward to detect sensitivity to common food and environmental allergens, including cow's milk, eggs, peanuts, dust mites, and pollen

➢ Cytokine profiling: Optional subset analysis of pro-inflammatory and anti-inflammatory cytokines (IL-4, IL-5, IL-10, IFN-γ) to explore immune modulation

4. Environmental and Lifestyle Factors:

➢ Household allergen exposure (pets, dust, mold)

➢ Air quality and urban pollution levels in the residential area

➢ Dietary practices, including introduction to complementary foods

➢ Use of probiotic or prebiotic supplements

Follow-Up and Observation Period

All infants were observed longitudinally for 12 months. Visits were scheduled at birth, 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12 months, and included detailed clinical examination, anthropometric measurements, laboratory testing, and parental questionnaires. Any hospitalizations, infections, or interventions were documented.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 and Microsoft Excel.

Descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics, laboratory parameters, and clinical findings. Comparative analyzes between groups included:

➢ Chi-square tests for categorical variables (eg, presence or absence of allergic disease)

➢ Independent t-tests for continuous variables (eg, IgE levels, eosinophil counts)

➢ Multivariate logistic regression to assess the influence of maternal COVID-19, breastfeeding duration, antibiotic exposure, and environmental factors on allergic disease risk

➢ Correlation analysis to identify relationships between laboratory markers and clinical severity

All results were considered statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Data visualization was achieved using bar graphs, line charts, and scatter plots to illustrate prevalence trends and laboratory findings.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths:

➢ Longitudinal design allows for early detection and follow-up of allergic manifestations

➢ Comprehensive integration of clinical, laboratory, and environmental data

➢ Matching of experimental and control groups reduces bias

Limitations:

➢ Relatively small sample size may limit generalizability

➢ Self-reported maternal data may introduce recall bias

➢ Limited cytokine analysis due to budgetary constraints

This detailed methodology ensures that the study captures multifactorial contributors to allergic disease development in postmature infants, particularly focusing on the immunological impacts of maternal COVID-19 infection. It provides a robust framework for analyzing clinical outcomes, identifying risk factors, and formulating preventive strategies for early-life allergic diseases.

Results

1. Prevalence of Allergic DiseasesThe prevalence of allergic diseases in postmature infants varied significantly between the experimental group (infants born to mothers who had COVID-19) and the control group (infants born to healthy mothers).

➢ Experimental Group: Out of 60 infants, 24 (40%) developed at least one allergic condition within the first 12 months of life.

➢ Control Group: Out of 60 infants, 12 (20%) were diagnosed with allergic diseases.

These results indicate that infants exposed to maternal COVID-19 during pregnancy had twice the risk of developing allergic diseases compared to the control group. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 6.4$, $p < 0.01$).

2. Types of Allergic Diseases

The allergic diseases observed in the study were categorized based on clinical and laboratory findings:

Atopic Dermatitis: Manifested as chronic pruritic eczema, often with dry skin patches on the cheeks, scalp, and extensor surfaces of limbs. In severe cases, excoriations and secondary bacterial infections were noted.

➢ Food Allergies: Most commonly triggered by cow's milk, eggs, and wheat products. Symptoms included gastrointestinal discomfort, diarrhea, and vomiting, as well as cutaneous manifestations like urticaria.

➢ Bronchial Asthma: Early signs included recurrent wheezing, coughing, and nocturnal respiratory distress. Pulmonary auscultation confirmed expiratory wheezes in affected infants.

➢ Urticaria and Other Reactions: Transient hives, angioedema, or mild respiratory symptoms were reported, often triggered by food or environmental allergens.

3. Laboratory Findings

Laboratory tests provided additional confirmation of allergic tendencies:

➢ Total IgE Levels: In the experimental group, total IgE levels were 1.5–2 times higher than in the control group (mean ± SD: 82.5 ± 15.4 IU/mL vs. 43.2 ± 12.1 IU/mL, $p < 0.001$).

➢ Specific IgE: Positive reactions were most common to cow's milk, eggs, and dust mites. 60% of infants in the experimental group had at least one positive allergen-specific IgE result, compared to 25% in the control group.

➢ Eosinophil Counts: Experimental group: 5.2 ± 1.1%, Control group: 2.6 ± 0.8%, confirming increased allergic predisposition ($p < 0.01$).

➢ Skin Tests: Patch and prick tests identified hypersensitivity in 60% of the experimental group versus 25% of controls. Reactions were graded based on erythema, induration, and vesicle formation.

4. Maternal and Prenatal Factors

Several maternal factors were strongly associated with increased allergic risk in infants:

➢ Severity of COVID-19 Infection: Mothers with moderate-to-severe COVID-19 had infants with higher IgE levels and more frequent allergic manifestations.

➢ Breastfeeding Duration: Shorter duration (<3 months) correlated with a higher incidence of food allergies and atopic dermatitis.

➢ Antibiotic Exposure: Prenatal antibiotic administration was associated with increased risk of atopic dermatitis and food allergies.

➢ Maternal Nutrition: Poor maternal nutrition during pregnancy (low intake of omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D) was linked with higher allergic disease incidence.

➢ Maternal Stress: High-stress levels during pregnancy also correlated with increased allergic risk, potentially due to cortisol-mediated modulation in the fetus.

5. Growth and Developmental Parameters

While most infants achieved standard growth milestones, subtle differences were observed:

➢ Infants in the experimental group showed slightly lower weight gain (mean 7.8 ± 0.9 kg) compared to controls (8.3 ± 0.7 kg) at 12 months, though still within WHO growth norms.

➢ Head circumference and length were comparable between groups.

➢ Infants with allergic manifestations often had disrupted sleep patterns and irritability, indirectly affecting growth trajectories.

6. Environmental and Lifestyle Observations

➢ Household Allergens: Exposure to pets, dust, or indoor smoking increased the likelihood of allergic responses.

➢ Probiotic Use: Infants receiving probiotics or prebiotics showed reduced incidence of atopic dermatitis and milder allergic symptoms.

➢ Early Introduction of Allergenic Foods: Early exposure before 6 months correlated with higher risk of sensitization in high-risk infants (those with maternal COVID-19 history).

7. Correlation Analysis

Multivariate regression identified the strongest predictors of allergic disease:

1. Maternal COVID-19 infection (OR 2.5, 95% CI 1.3–4.7, $p < 0.01$)

2. Short breastfeeding duration (OR 2.0, 95% CI 1.1–3.7, $p = 0.02$)

3. Prenatal antibiotic exposure (OR 1.8, 95% CI 1.0–3.2, p = 0.04)

4. Environmental allergen exposure (OR 1.5, 95% CI 1.0–2.4, p = 0.05)

No statistically significant association was found between infant sex or maternal age and allergic disease incidence.

8. Summary of Key Findings

➢ Allergic diseases are twice as common in postmature infants born to COVID-19-infected mothers.

➢ Atopic dermatitis, food allergy, and bronchial asthma are the most frequent conditions.

➢ Laboratory markers (IgE, eosinophils, positive skin tests) support clinical observations.

➢ Maternal factors (infection severity, breastfeeding, antibiotics) and environmental exposures are key risk modifiers.

➢ Probiotic and prebiotic supplementation, along with extended breastfeeding, may reduce the risk and severity of allergic manifestations.

Discussion

1. Impact of Maternal COVID-19 on Fetal Immune Development

The findings of our study confirm that maternal COVID-19 infection during pregnancy has a significant influence on fetal immune system development. SARS-CoV-2 infection induces systemic inflammation, which may alter the cytokine profile in maternal circulation. Increased levels of pro-inflammatory cytokines such as IL-6, TNF-α, and IL-1β can cross the placental barrier, affecting the developing fetal immune system (Zeng et al., 2020; Shanes et al., 2020).

This immune modulation can predispose the infant to allergic diseases postnatally, as confirmed by our study: infants born to mothers with COVID-19 had elevated IgE levels and increased eosinophil counts. These laboratory findings correlate with clinical manifestations such as atopic dermatitis, food allergies, and bronchial asthma.

Furthermore, alterations in maternal microbiota caused by infection, fever, and antibiotic treatment may disrupt the vertical transmission of beneficial bacteria, further impacting neonatal gut immune development (Dominguez-Bello et al., 2010; Korpela et al., 2018).

2. Mechanisms Linking Prenatal Infection to Allergic Outcomes

Several biological mechanisms explain the increased prevalence of allergic diseases:

➢ Cytokine-mediated immune programming: Prenatal exposure to inflammatory cytokines shifts T-helper cell balance towards Th2 dominance, promoting allergic responses (Palmer et al., 2008).

➢ Epigenetic modifications: Viral infections and maternal stress may induce DNA methylation changes in immune-related genes, altering postnatal immune function (Marsit , 2015).

➢ Altered antibody transfer: COVID-19 may affect the effectiveness of maternal IgG transfer, reducing protective immunity and increasing susceptibility to immune dysregulation (Flannery et al., 2021).

➢ Gut microbiome disruption: Maternal infection and antibiotic use can reduce neonatal microbial diversity, predisposing infants to atopic diseases (Arrieta et al., 2014).

3. Comparison with Previous Research

Our findings are consistent with global research:

➢ A study in China (Zeng et al., 2020) reported increased IgE levels and atopic dermatitis in infants born to mothers with COVID-19.

➢ Research from Italy and the USA (Shanes et al., 2020; Flannery et al., 2021) observed altered placental immune responses and higher rates of allergic sensitization in neonates.

➢ Previous studies on maternal viral infections (influenza, RSV) have similarly indicated a strong correlation between prenatal infection and postnatal allergic disease risk (Stevenson et al., 2018; Holt & Sly, 2018).

4. Influence of Breastfeeding and Nutritional Factors

Extended breastfeeding is a well-established protective factor against allergic diseases (Oddy, 2017). Our study confirms that infants breastfed for less than 3 months had higher rates of food allergy and atopic dermatitis. Breast milk provides immunoglobulins, cytokines, prebiotics, and probiotics, which support gut immune maturation.

Maternal nutrition, including intake of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, and antioxidants, plays a key role in modulating fetal immune development and reducing the risk of atopy (Best et al., 2016; Litonjua, 2019).

5. Environmental and Lifestyle Factors

Environmental exposures were significant contributors:

➢ Indoor allergens (dust mites, pet dander) increased allergic reactions, especially in infants with maternal COVID-19 history.

➢ Air pollution exacerbated respiratory symptoms and triggered bronchial asthma (Gaffin et al., 2015).

➢ Probiotics and prebiotics during infancy helped maintain gut microbiome balance, reducing allergy risk (Kuitunen et al., 2009).

6. Clinical Implications

The study emphasizes the importance of early detection and prevention of allergic diseases in postmature infants born to mothers with COVID-19:

➢ Routine screening of IgE levels and eosinophil counts in high-risk infants.

➢ Implementation of early dietary management, including hypoallergenic formulas if breastfeeding is insufficient.

➢ Probiotic supplementation as a preventive measure against atopic dermatitis.

➢ Close monitoring of respiratory symptoms to prevent or manage early-onset asthma.

7. Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights, certain limitations must be acknowledged:

➢ Sample size: 120 infants may limit generalizability. Larger multicenter studies are needed.

➢ Long-term outcomes: Allergic diseases may evolve over several years; thus, long-term follow-up is required.

➢ Maternal factors: Variations in severity of COVID-19 and comorbidities may influence results.

8. Recommendations for Future Research

➢ Investigate the epigenetic impact of maternal COVID-19 on neonatal immune development.

➢ Study the long-term allergy outcomes in children up to 5–10 years.

Conclusion

1. General Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that postmature infants born to mothers who contracted COVID-19 during pregnancy are at a significantly higher risk of developing allergic diseases compared to infants born to healthy mothers. The study findings indicate:

➢ A twofold increase in the prevalence of allergic disorders among infants whose mothers experienced COVID-19 infection during gestation.

➢ The most frequently observed allergic conditions include atopic dermatitis, food allergies, and bronchial asthma, often appearing within the first year of life.

➢ Laboratory investigations revealed elevated total IgE and specific IgE levels, along with increased eosinophil counts, confirming early immunological sensitization in these infants.

➢ Prenatal exposure to maternal inflammatory cytokines, immune system dysregulation, and altered maternal microbiota appears to negatively affect fetal immune development, increasing vulnerability to allergic reactions.

➢ Reduced transplacental transfer of maternal antibodies in COVID-19-affected pregnancies may compromise neonatal immune mechanisms defense.

These observations emphasize that maternal health during pregnancy directly affects fetal immune development, and postmature infants—whose immune, respiratory, and skin barrier systems are still immature—are particularly susceptible to allergic disorders.

2. Clinical and Public Health Implications

The findings underline the necessity of preventive strategies and early intervention for postmature infants at high risk:

➢ Regular Allergy Screening: Implement routine evaluation of IgE, eosinophils, and skin prick or patch tests to detect early allergic sensitization.

➢ Promotion of Exclusive Breastfeeding: Breast milk provides immunoglobulins, cytokines, and prebiotics that support the infant's immune system and gut microbiota.

➢ Nutritional Interventions: Maternal and infant diets enriched with omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, antioxidants, and probiotics can modulate immune responses and reduce allergic risks.

➢ Environmental Control: Maintaining a clean living environment, minimizing exposure to dust, pet dander, pollen, and other allergens can significantly reduce the likelihood of allergic manifestations.

➢ Early Clinical Intervention: Timely dermatological care for atopic dermatitis, dietary modification for food allergies, and respiratory monitoring for asthma can prevent complications and improve long-term outcomes.

3. Recommendations for Parents and Healthcare Providers

3.1 Maternal Health Management (Onaning sog' ligini nazorat qilish)

➢ Pregnant women should follow strict COVID-19 prevention protocols, including vaccination where appropriate.

➢ Adequate nutrition, stress management, and judicious use of antibiotics and medications during pregnancy are essential to protect fetal immune development.

➢ Monitoring maternal inflammatory markers and antibody levels during pregnancy may provide insight into potential risks for the infant.

3.2 Infant Care Strategies

➢ Maintain exclusive breastfeeding for at least the first 6 months, ensuring adequate immune protection.

➢ Administer probiotics and prebiotics to support gut microbiota development and enhance immune maturation.

➢ Delay introduction of allergenic foods until the infant's immune system is more developed, following evidence-based pediatric guidelines.

➢ Maintain clean and allergen-free environments, including regular ventilation and minimizing exposure to smoke or environmental pollutants.

3.3 Clinical Monitoring and Follow-up

➢ Establish longitudinal follow-up programs for postmature infants exposed prenatally to maternal COVID-19, tracking allergic, respiratory, and immunological outcomes.

➢ Regular assessments of skin condition, respiratory function, and immune markers can facilitate early diagnosis and management.

➢ Multidisciplinary coordination among pediatricians, allergists, nutritionists, and parents is critical to provide comprehensive care.

3.4 Research Recommendations

➢ Conduct long-term cohort studies to evaluate the impact of prenatal COVID-19 exposure on immune system development and allergic disease incidence.

➢ Investigate epigenetic, microbiome, and immunological mechanisms underlying increased allergic susceptibility.

➢ Explore preventive interventions, including maternal supplementation, early probiotic therapy, and immunomodulatory treatments to mitigate allergic risks.

4. Overall Significance

This study highlights that maternal infections during pregnancy, particularly COVID-19, have profound and lasting effects on infant health, especially in postmature neonates. The findings have several critical implications:

➢ Healthcare providers must prioritize prenatal care, COVID-19 prevention, and nutritional guidance to minimize adverse outcomes.

➢ Parents need to follow recommended infant care practices, emphasizing breastfeeding, nutrition, and allergen avoidance.

➢ Policy makers should support programs aimed at monitoring high-risk neonates, ensuring early intervention and follow-up.

➢ Future research must focus on mechanistic insights into immune dysregulation caused by maternal infections and the development of targeted preventive strategies.

By implementing these recommendations, it is possible to reduce the prevalence and severity of allergic diseases, enhance the quality of life for postmature infants, and contribute positively to long-term public health outcomes. These findings underscore the critical importance of integrated maternal and neonatal care to prevent early-onset allergies and support optimal infant immune development.

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