

## Supplementation with folic acid and orofacial clefts

### Suplementación con ácido fólico y fisuras orofaciales

Dear editor,

I read with great interest the article “*Folatos y Embarazo, conceptos actuales. ¿Es necesaria una suplementación con Ácido Fólico?*”<sup>1</sup>. It is known that food fortification and supplementation with folic acid have been effective in preventing birth defects, such as neural tube defects and congenital heart disease<sup>2</sup>. Another important point is the potential preventive role of folic acid in orofacial clefts. This has been a controversial subject in the literature.

However, a connection between neural tube defects and orofacial clefts has been discussed. In this case, their times of occurrence during embryogenesis, their status as defects as well as the related genetic aspects have been key points to understand this issue. On that basis, some similarities between these two malformations have been established<sup>3</sup>. Such data, in turn, support the theory that acid folic can likewise prevent orofacial clefts.

It should be noted, therefore, that orofacial clefts result from interaction between genetic and environmental factors<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, they occur during the embryonic and early fetal periods<sup>5</sup>. Thus, taking into account the influence of the environment factors (eg: vitamin de-

ficiency during pregnancy)<sup>4</sup>, the supplementation with folic acid during periconceptional period and first trimester of pregnancy could have an important role in preventing orofacial clefts. What do the article authors (*Folatos y Embarazo, conceptos actuales. ¿Es necesaria una suplementación con Ácido Fólico?*) think about it?

**Keywords:** Cleft lip; cleft palate; folic acid.

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