

pregnancy means that many of its associated problems can be prevented by good nutrition. Programmes of diet supplementation and counselling for pregnant women carried on by diet dispensaries have proven an effective means of improving the chances for the birth of a healthy baby of normal weight. Long-term study carried out by these dispensaries have shown that to be most influential, nutrition counselling must be started early in pregnancy and continued for more than twenty-one weeks.³⁵

20. The importance of good health care of the pregnant mother has been stressed as a means of preventing congenital defects often associated with prematurity. Such defects "in fact contribute to the general maladjustment of the human being, in terms of his capacity to deal with the stress of his environment and the potential for acting out anti-social behaviour"³⁶ The hope of prevention of many disabilities which may make a child more vulnerable to stress and therefore more prone to anti-social or criminal behaviour later in life would appear to lie at least partly in the provision of adequate nutrition and care in the prenatal period.