



PREVENTION FIRST

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders RESEARCH UPDATE

MARCH 2009

FASD Research Updates provide information about current research findings and increase the number of professionals and public policymakers who understand the need for a statewide response to FASD. If you would like more information on a specific article, please contact, Mary Simon, Library Manager, at 800.572.5385, ext. 252. For more information on FASD, please contact Lisa Kienzle, Special Initiative Manager - Springfield, at 800.252.8951, ext 107.

FASD PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Children with FASD and Adaptive Functions

A new Canadian study reveals that children with FASD rated lower in social interaction and communication, personal-living skills, and community-living skills and significantly higher on maladaptive behavior scales. They needed more support and supervision than peers with typical development to perform day-to-adaptive skills and manage behavior. Children with FASD and their caregivers need support for daily activities involving personal and social performance. Awareness of specific strengths and needs can guide interventions that promote function and participation.

Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 10/08, p.238-48.

Primary Health Care Professionals and Current Practices

Assessing the current practices and resource needs of primary health care professionals in regards to their alcohol risk assessment practices is an important step in providing optimal training and educational methods for pregnant women and women of childbearing age in order to prevent FASD. This Canadian research (Saskatchewan) indicated that the majority of survey respondents reported either rarely or never using a standardized screening tool in assessing alcohol risk in women. The study points out the need for training of primary health care professionals.

Canadian Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, Summer 2008, p.214-22.

Rural-Urban Differences in Provider Practice

Four Canadian researchers sought to determine whether differences exist between rural and urban health care providers in knowledge of, attitudes about, and awareness of FASD and preconception counseling. The conclusions point out that few differences exist with regard to knowledge and diagnosis of FASD; however, rural providers are more prepared to access resources for women with addiction issues and are more likely to care for patients with an FASD.

Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine, Autumn 2008, p.180-188.

FASD PREVALENCE

Pregnant Women and Drinking: New Statistics

A new report from SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health examines how many women report alcohol use during pregnancy, by age. The report is compiled from data gathered from female respondents age 15 to 44. Results of the study indicate that pregnant women aged 15 to 17 may be in particular need of alcohol prevention services tailored for their age group because nearly 16 percent of them used alcohol in the past month. Pregnant women in this age group consumed an average of 24 drinks in the past month. [They drank an average 6 days and an average of 4 drinks on the dates they drank.]

SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies. (September 11, 2008). Alcohol Use among Pregnant Women and Recent Mothers: 2002 -2007 Rockville, MD.

EFFECTS OF PRENATAL ALCOHOL EXPOSURE

Targeting the Needs of People with FASD and Mental Health Issues

Overview of secondary disabilities associated with FASD (failure in school, trouble with the law, inappropriate sexual behavior, alcohol and other drug addiction, etc.). Ninety-four percent of people with FASD experienced mental health problems. Sixty percent of children with FASD also had ADHD. Includes, updates from Canada on intervention programs for high-risk mothers, the importance of accurate diagnosis of FASD, and assessing a client's specific disabilities, as well as tips for clinicians.

CrossCurrents: Journal of Addiction and Mental Health, Winter 2008, p. 12-14.

FASD IDENTIFICATION AND DIAGNOSIS

Universal or Targeted Screening for Fetal Alcohol Exposure?

Canadian Researcher Hopkins, compared the costs of testing meconium for alcohol exposure in newborns with two scenarios: all infants in Ontario (universal) and, infants who have an older sibling diagnosed with FASD (targeted). Depending on society's willingness-to-pay threshold for improving infants' lives in a setting of considerable equity concerns, universal screening and targeted screening of infants both represent policies that are good value for the money.

Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, 07/08, p. 510-519.

Behavioral Phenotype Helps Diagnose FASD in Children

Dr. Kodituwakku (Center for Development and Disability at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque) proposed a behavioral phenotype for children with FASD that includes, dysexecutive syndrome-increased inattentiveness. This behavioral phenotype will help distinguish them from a significant number of children who have developmental problems linked to maternal alcoholism but don't have full-blown FASD. The data also

suggests that some clinical interventions be employed when working with these patients such as: concrete examples, presenting information slowly, and repeating the information several times. Also, visual aids and illustrations can help these children learn, as can hands-on techniques such as calculators and subject-specific teaching keyboards.

Pediatric News, 08/08, p. 33-34.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH FASD

Finding Ways to Teach to Students with FASD

An examination of a unique educational program designed for youth with FASD in Alberta, Canada. Care was taken to include the participants' voice in this case study resulting in key insights and strategies for working with youth and or students struggling with FASD. Additionally, in exploring the impact of the program on the participants' learning, growth and progress, key strategies for teaching and learning were revealed.

International Journal of Special Education, 23, p. 54-73.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY FASD RESEARCH

Knowledge and Attitudes of Criminal Justice Professional in Relation to FASD

This report reflects the results of a provincial survey of judges and crown prosecutors to determine their attitudes, knowledge, behaviors and training needs related to FASD. In general, the survey results suggest that while aware of some aspects of FASD, judges and prosecutors both desire and need more education and training to support them in their work with individuals with FASD who come into conflict with the law. Specifically changes and improvements are needed in legal policy issues, research, and professional education and practice.

Canadian Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, Summer 2008, p. 306-13.

FASD RESOURCES

FASD Handbook

A well-researched manual written for professionals and parents who work with children affected by prenatal alcohol exposure. It attempts to depict these children across the span of childhood by presenting the most common behavioral, developmental, and learning problems the children manifest as they grow. Organized by age, this unique book allows the reader to quickly find information about a child in relation to that child's specific point within the age continuum of development. The information presented is a combination of the latest research as well as the experience of the authors in providing assessment and treatment to children affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol.

FASD Across the Span of Childhood: A Handbook for Parents and Providers. Chicago, IL: Children's Research Triangle, 2008.

Note: The research above is compiled from various resources and is to be used for informational purposes only.

About Prevention First

Prevention First is a nonprofit resource center committed to building and supporting healthy, drug-free communities through public education, professional training and effective tools for those working to prevent drug use and related issue such as violence, teen pregnancy and academic failure. As it became more apparent through research and clinical experience that a range of effects (including physical, behavioral and cognitive) could arise from prenatal alcohol exposure, Prevention First in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Community Health and Prevention implemented a FASD Initiative devoted to preventing FASD. Prevention First website, www.prevention.org, provides information and resources about FASD. Prevention First Library and Clearinghouse also provide materials that can be used to teach and raise FASD awareness.