



Coalition of Alcohol and Drug Educators

Dalgarno
INSTITUTE

Political Briefing

Media Briefing

Community Briefing

Media & Community Briefing:

F.A.S.D Awareness Day 2019

*“Day”: 9TH Hour 9TH Day of
9TH Month - Every Year!
**PREVENTION IS THE
ONLY OPTION!”***



“Let’s all make a noise to raise awareness of the incurable, but completely preventable, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder!”

“The greatest tragedy of this dangerous scenario, is that way too many people, even though they are aware of the risks, seem to believe they won’t be the ones who will have a child impacted – permanently – by this preventable condition,” said Executive Director, Dalgarno Institute, Shane Varcoe

According to the recently released, National FASD [Action Plan 2018-28](#)

FASD affects many communities – it is not isolated to a specific country, region or population group. While, Australia does not have national FASD prevalence data, and there is general agreement among researchers and practitioners that rates are underestimated. The global prevalence of FASD among children and youth in the general population was estimated to be 7.7 per 1000 population. Research indicates that prevalence estimates are higher than assumed thus far, and clear guidelines on assessing FASD prevalence are required. A recent study of alcohol use during pregnancy and FASD prevalence estimated that one in every 67 women who consumed alcohol during pregnancy would deliver a child with FASD, translating to around 119,000 children born with FASD in the world every year.

Prevalence of FASD in vulnerable populations is higher. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians estimates indicate that the incidence of FASD may range from 1.87 to 4.7 per 1,000 births. ¹

“That data set can mean little to the average Australian, until you see its impact reflected in outcomes as that child grows”, said Mr Varcoe

It has been speculated that as many as 1 in 4 incarcerated in the U.S. Correctional System are suffering with F.A.S.D, whilst that statistic is not confirmed, the following data does lend serious credibility to that anecdotal claim. According to Canadian studies FASD was identified in 11%– 23% of young people in corrective services. ²

Further to that, the Australian research work, *Foetal alcohol spectrum disorder and youth justice: a prevalence study among young people sentenced to detention in Western Australia* revealed

a representative sample of young people in detention in Western Australia, has documented a high prevalence of FASD and severe neurodevelopmental impairment, the majority of which had not been previously identified...88 young people (89%) had at least one domain of severe neurodevelopmental impairment, and 36 were diagnosed with FASD, a prevalence of 36% (95% CI 27% to 46%). ³

Mr Varcoe went on to say, “The double-edged tragedy of this data is that it reveals, not only was it preventable (no exposure of the child to alcohol whilst in the womb) but it is also incurable. These are just a couple of the reasons **International Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Awareness Day** is being ever more heavily promoted each year.”



This year FASD Day is on **Monday, 9th of September**. So, why the 9th of the 9th? The date helps remind how utterly vital it is to protect the first 9 months of life in the womb, and the importance of best practice abstinence from alcohol during this formative season of the child's life.

The Good news is, that the chief priority of the National FASD plan, is of course Prevention! The plan states that;

Current Australian guidelines recommend that women abstain from alcohol when planning a pregnancy, during their pregnancy, and when breastfeeding, because no safe level of alcohol consumption has been established.⁴

Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is **totally preventable** if mothers-to-be do not drink alcohol. The latest Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines say that for those who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, not drinking is the safest option.

"It is important to note", said Mr Varcoe, "that each year we seek to remind readers that , **it is not just a 'women's only'** issue". Research reported on Science Daily adds to growing data that paternal drinking pre-conception does matter.

"...ground-breaking research provides the first definitive evidence that fathers' drinking habits pre-conception can cause significant fetal abnormalities." ⁵

Commenting on this research coming out of South Korea, Criminal Lawyer Russell Goldflam stated '*[it] shows an embryo can be affected at the time of conception by compromised semen from men who drink excessively*'. He also said the research could have profound implications on policy responses to FASD". Instead of focussing on 'irresponsible women who drink' we need to cast our net more broadly and develop policies in the population overall, including men," ⁶

Here are some other quick facts you need to remember;

- Some of the most crippling secondary disabilities that people with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum (FAS)/Foetal Alcohol Effects (FAE) face include mental health problems, disrupted school experience, inappropriate sexual behavior, trouble with the law, alcohol and drug problems, difficulty caring for their children, and homelessness. ⁷
- FASD is the leading cause of mental retardation in western countries. ⁸
- 428 distinct disease conditions that co-occur in people with (FASD), ⁹
- There is no cure, but Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are 100% preventable (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2003).¹⁰

For more info go to [NOFASD Facts](#)

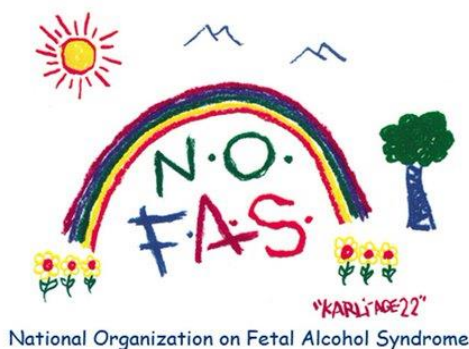
For enquires, Coordinator operations@dalgarnoinsitute.org.au



September is FASD

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Awareness Month



Endnotes

1. [National FASD Strategic Action Plan 2018-28, p 10.](#)
2. [Foetal alcohol spectrum disorder and youth justice: a prevalence study among young people sentenced to detention in Western Australia](#)
3. *ibid*
4. [National FASD Strategic Action Plan 2018-28, p 16](#)
5. [Fathers drinking: Also responsible for fetal disorders?](#)
6. Criminal lawyer Russell Goldflam <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-01/foetal-alcohol-inquiry-told-men-as-much-to-blame-as-women/5642356>
7. The challenge of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Overcoming secondary disabilities. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1997-36773-000>
8. <http://come-over.to/FAS/FASDfacts.htm>
9. <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-01-conditions-co-occur-fetal-alcohol-spectrum.html>
10. <http://come-over.to/FAS/FASDfacts.htm>

DALGARNO
INSTITUTE

[Political Briefing](#)

[Media Briefing](#)

[Community Briefing](#)

