



Fetal Alcohol Network New Zealand

Kia ora, greetings everyone

Attached is the promised report on the adolescent and adults with FASD conference attended recently in Canada. If anyone would like to know more about any of the topics covered, please let me know. Further conference updates and news items are included below.

The power point presentation of Dr Therese Grant is now on the Alcohol Healthwatch website www.ahw.co.nz 'What's new'.

The next FANNZ meeting will be held at the seminar room, 2nd floor, 27 Gillies Ave, Newmarket, Thursday 12 June - 9.30am to 12.30pm (public transport is best). Discussion will include updates on policy development, projects, issues, plans especially regarding this years International FASDay activities - 09/09/09. The meeting will conclude with a shared lunch so bring along a favorite kai together with your brilliant awareness raising ideas!
Best wishes

Christine Rogan
Alcohol Healthwatch
PO Box 99407
Newmarket,
Auckland 1149
New Zealand
64 9 520 7037
christine@ahw.co.nz
fannz@ahw.co.nz
www.ahw.co.nz

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Australia

Update on the September 'arbias' conference and policy regarding assessing FASD.

You may recall that in November 2007, this network was advised of an upcoming Australian conference - Insights: and Solutions: the combined 2nd International Conference on Alcohol and Other Drug Related Brain Injury and the Brain Injury Australia National Conference, 1 – 3 September 2008, Melbourne AUSTRALIA (www.arbias.org.au). At that time arbias was keenly involved with FASD prevention and intervention strategies including developing diagnostic assessments for people with FASD in Australia. Aligned with this were plans to include FASD as a major conference focus and as advised last year, this would include international FASD expert as keynote speakers. However, there has been a significant change in direction and now this conference will only include a 1 ½ hr concurrent session for FASD shared by 4 presenters. On the issue of their altered plans for FASD assessments the arbias administration has furnished us with the following explanation.

“arbias’ expertise does not lie within the field of FASD and as such we recognize that we can not be considered to be ‘leaders’ in this field. As eminent Neuropsychologists and pediatric specialists etc have engaged in further discussions with arbias we now realize that it takes a multidisciplinary team of specialty pediatric services combined to accurately diagnose and assess FASD and that a Neuropsychological assessment alone is not adequate.”

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Canada

The 3rd International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. *Integrating Research, Policy, and Promising Practice Around the World: A Catalyst for Change.*

Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, March 11th-14th, 2009

Advance Notice/Call for Presentations for **The 3rd International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder** conference (March 11th-14th, 2009 in Victoria, BC, Canada) is now available online at <http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/FASD09.htm>.

This conference will provide education and informative updates on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and complex health components specific to individuals with FASD, and showcase best practices in the field.

We are accepting abstract submissions until **June 30th, 2008**. You can submit the abstract online and remember to send them in before the deadline!

For further information or a downloadable flyer, please visit our website at www.interprofessional.ubc.ca or contact 604-822-7524 or via e-mail ipad@interchange.ubc.ca.

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UK

Dangers of drinking while pregnant.

05 May 2008

By DAVID SEDGWICK (abridged)

PROBLEMS caused by a mother drinking too much alcohol during her pregnancy were outlined at the region's first conference on the subject.

Two mums, Tracey Hayter and Susan Fleisher, talked first-hand about the difficulties of bringing up a child with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Speakers from all over the country attended the first regional conference of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, hosted by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Nearly 100 healthcare professionals from throughout the north east – including midwives, clinicians and health visitors – heard about the effects on the unborn baby from mothers drinking alcohol during pregnancy. The conference was organised by Barbara McKenzie, an experienced midwife who now specialises in helping mums-to-be with substance misuse.

<http://www.newsguardian.co.uk/latest-news/Danger-of-drinking-while-pregnant.4038582.jp>

News Guardian

North Tyneside, U.K.

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South Africa

South African Families, Communities Battle Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

By Scott Bobb (abridged)

22 May 2008

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), which affects the babies of mothers who drink alcohol during pregnancy, is considered by international health authorities to be the most preventable cause of mental retardation and neurological damage. And in South Africa, with one of the highest rates of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome in the world, civic groups and families are teaming up to prevent it and provide a better future for its victims. Correspondent Scott Bobb reports from Cape Town.

Tisha Lourens is an outgoing, active 12-year-old growing up in a loving adoptive family in Cape Town. But Tisha is small for her age and sometimes has difficulty expressing herself. These are symptoms of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Her mother, Vivien Lourens, says babies born with FAS must go through detoxification. This suffering passes, but the disabilities are permanent.

Tisha has not only survived but thrives. She goes to a special school for children with learning disabilities, but still struggles to learn to read. Tisha faces other challenges such as behavior and attention problems. These often lead to problems at school and slow her progress.

Dr. Colleen Adnams, a specialist in childhood development at Cape Town University, notes that Fetal Alcohol Syndrome was scientifically identified 30 years ago. But she says only recently have the voices of its victims in South Africa become loud enough to prompt a search for solutions. "There is quite sufficient information about the outcomes and the problems in children and their families for us to start to look for strategies at a broad level as well as at an individual level towards intervention and towards supporting children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders," she explained. She says Fetal Alcohol Syndrome must be confronted on two fronts. The first is to prevent it through education and support programs. The second is to help victims and their families deal with its symptoms and repercussions.

"We want to prevent secondary syndromes, problems of behavior, learning, [and] social outcomes that result from them already having a problem,"

Experts say South Africa is only beginning to address the various implications of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. There are some excellent programs but these are few. They say different government agencies responsible for the various aspects of the problem need to work together against FAS. And civic groups and the private sector must help with funding and volunteers.

<http://voanews.com/english/2008-05-22-voa33.cfm>

VOA News

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France

Having a Drink During Pregnancy Is Common for French Women

By Glenda Fautleroy, Contributing Writer Health Behavior News Service (abridged)

More than half of women in France continue to drink alcohol during their pregnancies, according to a new French study. However, the researchers also found that most of these women are uninformed about the risks to their babies' health. "Our results surprised us because we didn't think that the women were so massively going to answer that they were so ignorant of the dangers of alcohol during pregnancy," said Ingrid de Chazeron of the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire, who led the study.

The study, published in the May issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, compiled data from 837 pregnant women at public and private obstetric centers who participated in the study between July 2003 and June 2004.

The women responded to a survey that asked about their drinking patterns during pregnancy, and 52.2 percent said they had used alcohol having at least one drink during the time. The researchers noted this was a "huge difference" from the United States, where only 12 percent of pregnant women report any alcohol use. Moreover, 13.7 percent of the participants said they had at least one binge-drinking episode where they had five or more drinks on one occasion.

de Chazeron and her colleagues said that drinking wine and beer is part of the "regular eating habits" in France and there is a lot of controversy over the safety of occasional drinking during pregnancy. "At the time of our study, I don't think that women had been aware of the risks to their baby's health about drinking," de Chazeron said. "First, there was not enough campaigning about the dangers of alcohol during pregnancy ... and [women] do not believe that small consumptions, even regularly, can influence the future of their child."

May 4, 2008, 4:00 PM US Eastern time.

<http://www.hbns.org/getDocument.cfm?documentID=1683>

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World Health Organisation

Thursday, May 22, 2008

GENEVA (Reuters) - The World Health Organization (WHO) is set to draw up a global strategy to tackle youth binge drinking and other forms of harmful alcohol consumption blamed for 2.3 million deaths a year, officials said on Thursday.

"The harmful use of alcohol causes serious public health problems," said Dr. Ala Alwan, WHO assistant director-general for non-communicable diseases and mental health.

Strategy 5 of the WHO Report includes the following: Harmful drinking among young people and women is an increasing concern across many countries. Drinking to intoxication and heavy episodic drinking are frequent among adolescents and young adults, and the negative impact of alcohol use is greater in younger age groups of both sexes. The range of prenatal damage includes fetal alcohol syndrome and various physical defects and neurobiological deficits that impair development and social functioning. Harmful drinking effects not only those who drink, but also others and has consequences for society.

The WHO Report is available http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/A61/A61_13-en.pdf