

FASD | ONE

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Ontario Network of Expertise

What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder?

“Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is an umbrella term that describes the range of effects that can occur in an individual who was prenatally exposed to alcohol, and includes FAS. These effects can include lifelong physical, mental, behavioural difficulties, and learning disabilities.

There are currently no confirmed statistics on the number of people in Canada who have FASD, yet, prenatal alcohol exposure is considered the most common known cause of developmental disability in the western world....

...FASD is present from birth, although individuals are not usually diagnosed in infancy, but rather later in life when symptoms such as learning disabilities and challenging behaviours emerge.

The most commonly cited estimate is 9.1 per 1000 live births or roughly 1% of the population (Health Canada 2006). This is an estimated rate extrapolated from studies conducted in the United States. Based on the currently accepted prevalence rate of 1%, the annual cost of FASD in Canada has been estimated at approximately \$7.6 billion (Thanh and Jonsson, 2009).... [Prevalence]

...No two people with FASD will have the same challenges due to the wide variation of alcohol effects on brain development. They are at increased risk for mental health issues, school difficulty, addictions, and difficulties maintaining employment. Some of the more commonly seen challenges include:

Executive functioning – difficulty with judging, planning, delaying gratification, consequences, organization, impulsivity, memory

Communication – can be highly verbal, but lack comprehension skills both written and verbal

Neuromotor Defects – impaired balance and coordination

Sensory Deficits – pain, touch, heat, light

If the above are not appropriately understood and addressed, individuals with FASD are at increased risk for early school failure, involvement with the law, family disruption and homelessness...” Canada FASD Research Network Fact Sheet and What We Know About Prevalence.

Public Health Agency of Canada - Frequently asked questions

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog-ini/fasd-etcaf/faq/index-eng.php>

CanFASD Canada FASD Research Network - FASD Fact Sheet

<http://www.canfasd.ca/press-centre/fasd-fact-sheet/>

Lutherwood - Learn about FASD

<http://www.fasdwaterlooregion.ca/about-fasd>

Canadian Pediatric Society

Caring for Kids

Pregnancy & Babies - Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder: What you should know about drinking during pregnancy

http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/fetal_alcohol_spectrum_disorder