

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: From an Educator's Perspective

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First International Conference on
Prevention of FASD

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Aim and Design

- To explore to what extent early and accurate identification of FASD is made when a child is enrolled in a public school setting
- FASD is defined as an organic brain injury that results from maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy
- Literature review and interviews with participants

Setting and Participants

School staff from several Minnesota metropolitan K-12 public schools

- Teachers
- Student Services personnel
- Administrators

Also, medical professionals and other specialists from non-school based agencies and organizations

Goal

Early identification of FASD may provide educational accommodations, and consequently the student may have a better chance of avoiding secondary disabilities such as, disrupted school experience, chemical abuse, trouble with the law, etc.

Streissguth's Study

- Observed that their participants came in close contact with many different community professionals and agencies
- 100 percent came into contact with school personnel
- Suggests that an opportunity exists for educators to provide a prescriptive plan for a student suspected of having an FASD

Understanding the Occurrence of Secondary Disabilities in Clients with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects (1996) Streissguth et al.

Hofmann's Findings

In Minnesota, if a Pre-K child is identified as needing intervention services, specific documentation will be made through early childhood special education records.

However, after 2nd grade, all that may remain in the student's health folder is the child's height, weight, and a vague summary.

Findings continued

If problems in the education setting reemerge, the assessment information will have been shredded leaving the child and his/her parents and the child's future teachers to start from scratch.

Conclusions

Researchers regret that children are diagnosed late, misdiagnosed, or not diagnosed at all when there is prenatal exposure to alcohol. Without a diagnosis, researchers expressed misgivings that accessibility to services remains closed and secondary disabilities are more likely to occur. However, there is hope . . .

Progress

- Minnesota ranking of women who are of child bearing age who drink dropped from 4th place in the nation to 7th
- Minnesota has 15 diagnostic clinics
- MOFAS Diagnostic Clinic has assessed 32 children (ages 2-16) in its first year
- Classrooms designed specifically for students diagnosed with FASD
- DSM-V Appendix: ND-PAE

Contact Information

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