

Overview of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Justice System

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a term used to describe a range of lifelong physical, cognitive, and behavioural impairments that can occur in a person whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. FASD affects individuals differently, and can cause a range of problems, including developmental delay, learning difficulties, and social and behavioural problems. FASD is a leading cause of preventable intellectual disability in Australia.

Prevalence of FASD in Australia

FASD is a significant public health issue in Australia, with estimates suggesting that up to 5% of the population may be affected. However, there is limited data on the prevalence of FASD in Australia, and there is a need for more research in this area.

The best way to prevent FASD is to avoid alcohol during pregnancy



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Impact of FASD on the justice system

FASD can have a significant impact on the justice system in Australia. **Individuals with FASD may struggle with understanding the legal system, communicating with lawyers and police, and complying with court orders.** They may also have difficulty understanding the consequences of their actions, which can lead to repeated offending and incarceration.



FASD and criminal justice outcomes

Research has shown that individuals with FASD are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. They are more likely to be arrested, charged, and convicted of offences, and they are more likely to receive custodial sentences than individuals without FASD. They are also more likely to reoffend.

For more information email:

 policy@fpdn.org.au



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Addressing FASD in the justice system

There is a need for greater awareness and understanding of the impact of FASD on the justice system in Australia. This includes training for judges, lawyers, and other legal professionals to identify FASD and make appropriate accommodations in the legal process. It is also important to provide support and interventions for individuals with FASD who encounter the justice system, such as diversion programs, mental health treatment, and assistance with navigating the legal system.



Conclusion

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a significant public health issue in Australia that can have a significant impact on the justice system. Greater awareness and understanding of FASD is needed to ensure that individuals with FASD can access appropriate support and interventions within the legal system.

