

# Irreversible Consequences of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Kristin Rasmussen\*

Department of Medical Physiology and Pharmacology, University of Touro, Middletown, USA

## DESCRIPTION

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a acute condition caused by maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy. It is a preventable tragedy that affects thousands of children worldwide, leading to lifelong physical, behavioral, and cognitive impairments. A series of illnesses known as foetal alcohol spectrum disorders can develop in a person who was exposed to alcohol before birth. Physical issues, behavioural issues, and learning issues can all be a result of these impacts. A person with FASD frequently struggles with a variety of these issues. A series of illnesses known as foetal alcohol spectrum disorders can develop in a person exposed to alcohol as a result of their mother drinking alcohol when she was pregnant. Alcohol is a teratogen, and there is no known safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy. There is also no known safe period of time during pregnancy for alcohol consumption.

## The irreversible consequences

FASD encompasses a range of lifelong disabilities that can significantly impact individuals and their families. Physical abnormalities, such as facial malformations and growth deficiencies. The real challenges lie within the neurological and behavioral impairments that affect learning, memory, attention, and social skills. These individuals often struggle with academic performance, employment prospects, and personal relationships. The ripple effects of FASD extend beyond the affected individuals, imposing emotional, financial, and societal burdens.

## The potential of prevention

The tragic reality is that FASD is entirely preventable. Education and awareness about the risks and consequences of alcohol consumption during pregnancy are paramount. It is crucial for healthcare professionals, policymakers, and society as a whole to prioritize prevention efforts. This involves encouraging pregnant women to abstain from drinking and offering reachable support systems for those who may be dealing with alcohol abuse.

## A call for responsibility

Preventing FASD requires a collective effort to foster a culture of

responsibility. Society must support expectant mothers by providing accessible healthcare services, early intervention programs, and community resources that promote healthy pregnancies. Equally important is eradicating the social stigma surrounding addiction and mental health issues, ensuring that women feel safe seeking help without fear of judgment or punishment.

## Education and support

Comprehensive education about FASD should be integrated into school curricula, healthcare settings, and community outreach programs. By increasing awareness, it can empower individuals to make informed choices and support affected individuals with compassion and understanding. Early diagnosis and intervention are crucial in managing the challenges associated with FASD. Accessible support systems, including counseling, therapy, and specialized education programs, can provide individuals and families with the tools they need to navigate the lifelong journey of living with FASD.

## Characteristics of FASD

- Individuals with FASD may have distinct facial features, including small eye openings, a smooth philtrum (the vertical groove between the nose and upper lip), and a thin upper lip
- FASD exhibit impulsivity, hyperactivity, attention problems, difficulties with social skills and judgment, poor frustration tolerance, and increased risk-taking behaviors
- Regulating feelings and acquiring social abilities
- Impulsivity and hyperactivity
- Communication issues like speech impediments
- People with FASD often exhibit growth deficiencies, such as low birth weight, below-average height and weight, and delayed or impaired growth throughout childhood and adolescence.

FASD an entirely preventable tragedy with far-reaching consequences. By prioritizing education, awareness, and support systems, it has the power to eliminate this preventable condition. Together, let's take responsibility, empower expectant mothers, and work towards a future where no child is needlessly burdened by FASD.

**Correspondence to:** Kristin Rasmussen, Kristin Rasmussen, Department of Medical Physiology and Pharmacology, University of Touro, Middletown, USA, E-mail: kristinrasubh@gmail.com

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