**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS’ KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER AND FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER PREVENTION**

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**Objective:** Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is the leading cause of developmental disability among Canadians. Research on student populations across Canada has previously focused on students’ knowledge of the broader social impacts of alcohol use, such as impaired driving, rather than knowledge of FASD, specifically. To date, minimal research has been conducted exploring students’ knowledge of FASD and FASD prevention initiatives. The goal of the current study was to investigate undergraduate students’ knowledge of FASD and FASD prevention, given that students represent a potential high-risk population for alcohol-exposed pregnancies.

**Methods:** Undergraduate students at Laurentian University were recruited to complete an online, self-report questionnaire via Google Forms which included 37 questions about alcohol use, attitudes towards alcohol use during pregnancy, knowledge of FASD, and FASD prevention. This questionnaire was adapted from earlier Canadian surveys conducted by the Environics Research Group (2000, 2006), initially created for the Public Health Agency of Canada, and was updated with current evidence (e.g., language use and diagnostic terminology). 127 Laurentian University undergraduate students across various programs, ethnicities, cultural background, and genders responded to the questionnaire. The responses acquired from participants were electronically aggregated and analyzed using primarily descriptive statistical analyses.

**Results:** At the time of this submission, the data collection is still in progress. However, based on the acquired responses to date, preliminary findings indicate that students recognize that prenatal alcohol exposure can adversely interfere with normal fetal development. Despite this recognition, findings also revealed that 30.3% of participants stated that ‘a small amount of alcohol use during pregnancy can usually be considered safe’, while another 21% of student participants were unsure. Overall, students indicated that they had heard of FASD; however, participants were unable to apply this knowledge when asked to provide a written definition of FASD in their own words. Moreover, students’ knowledge (or lack thereof) concerning a "safe" amount of alcohol use is during pregnancy, as well as their scarcity of knowledge of FASD as a potential consequence of this prenatal alcohol exposure, may demonstrate a lack of education provided to vulnerable high-risk populations, including students of childbearing age.

**Discussion:** Similar to the results of previous studies regarding students’ and professionals’ knowledge of FASD and FASD prevention, undergraduate students in this sample also lacked knowledge concerning the adverse effects of FASD and the potential consequences of prenatal alcohol exposure. Further work is needed to enhance students’ knowledge of FASD to help students make informed decisions about their drinking behaviours and to reduce the prevalence of FASD among vulnerable demographics, including students of childbearing age who are at risk for alcohol-exposed pregnancies. Sampling this population provides an opportunity to increase students’ knowledge of the potential effects of FASD, while in turn, relaying the importance of abstaining from alcohol consumption during and while planning to become pregnant. Overall, the information collected from this study will help inform future FASD prevention initiatives that support the unique geographic and population specific considerations.