**SUPPORTING HEALTHY PREGNANCIES: UNDERSTANDING PREGNANT WOMEN AND NEW MOTHERS’ PERSPECTIVES REGARDING FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS TO INFORM EFFECTIVE AND NON-STIGMATIZING APPROACHES IN NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO**

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**Objective:** Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a diagnostic term used to describe the lifelong impacts on fetal development as a result of alcohol use during pregnancy. Alcohol use during pregnancy is a significant public health concern as 10 to 15% of Canadian women report consuming alcohol during pregnancy, and FASD impacts approximately 4% of the Canadian population. Pregnancy is a period when women are more likely to adopt healthier behaviours to manifest positive outcomes for themselves and their children. Thus, improving current educational and FASD prevention initiatives can help reduce the risk of alcohol use during pregnancy and FASD as a potential consequence. Therefore, the objectives of this study are three-fold: (1) to explore pregnant and postpartum women’s attitudes about alcohol use during pregnancy; (2) to understand pregnant and postpartum women’s perspectives regarding existing FASD prevention campaigns; and (3) to generate recommendations from these women to inform non-stigmatizing FASD prevention approaches in Northeastern Ontario.

**Methods:** Using a basic qualitative approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), this study will employ semi-structured focus group interviews. Overall, 30 pregnant women and new mothers across the Sudbury and Manitoulin regions of Northeastern Ontario, between the ages of 17 and 45, will be recruited to participate. Participants will be randomly assigned to focus groups, lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes and consist of 5-8 participants. Participants will be shown ten images of existing FASD prevention campaigns to facilitate discussion on existing Level 1 FASD prevention efforts and alcohol use during pregnancy. Participants will be asked semi-structured questions to understand their attitudes, perspectives, and opinions regarding the messaging and imagery of the displayed FASD prevention campaigns. Data from this study will be analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2019) reflexive thematic analysis approach to generate salient themes from the participants’ responses.

**Results:** At the time of the abstract submission, the data collection has not commenced.

**Discussion:** FASD prevention efforts have been heavily criticized for their harmful and stigmatizing nature as emotional aspects of fear, guilt, and shock have been profoundly relied on to discourage women from consuming alcohol during pregnancy. Consequently, women may be reluctant to disclose information about their alcohol use. In the Sudbury and Manitoulin regions of Northeastern Ontario, reported rates of alcohol consumption during pregnancy are substantially lower compared to the Canadian national average (i.e., 2.2% compared to 10 to 15%). The considerable discrepancy may result from the stigmatizing nature surrounding FASD, thereby causing women to under-report their alcohol use. Despite alcohol use during pregnancy being a concern within the province of Ontario, prevalence rates of gestational alcohol use and FASD among rural, remote, and northern communities are suggested as being a progressively growing concern. Hence, suggesting that women of childbearing age in the Sudbury and Manitoulin regions may be more susceptible to alcohol-exposed pregnancies. Nevertheless, this study will contribute to the growing discourse on the need to develop FASD prevention campaigns at the community level, help improve educational initiatives and foster a supportive environment for pregnant women and new mothers disclosing information about alcohol use during pregnancy.