Behavourial Profiles of Kindergarten Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

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INTRODUCTION

• Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is the leading developmental disability in Canada.
• No reliable method for diagnosing FASD exists.
• Because children with FASD share behavioural similarities with other disorders, they may be misdiagnosed.
• FASD underdiagnosis has led to gross underestimates of prevalence, contributing to a lack of awareness of drinking during pregnancy.

PURPOSE

• Compare the developmental health of three groups of kindergarten children in Ontario and Manitoba: those with FASD only, those with FASD and comorbidities, and their typically-developing peers.

RESULTS

FASD in Manitoba and Ontario

Results 1: No significant differences on EDI scores between children with FASD across provinces

Children with comorbidities differ significantly on the following subdomains:

- FASD-C scores worse than FASD-O
  - Physical independence, overall social competence, readiness to explore new things, basic literacy, basic numeracy, interest in numeracy/literacy + memory
- FASD-C scores better than FASD-O
  - Aggressive behaviour

Sample: 133,995 kindergarten children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ontario</th>
<th>Manitoba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No FASD</td>
<td>111,718</td>
<td>22,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FASD Only</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FASD + Comorbidities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
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</tbody>
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Measure: (Early Development Instrument)

The EDI is a teacher-completed measure of children’s developmental health at school entry in five different domains:

1. Physical Health & Wellbeing (PHWB)
2. Social Competence (SC)
3. Emotional Maturity (EM)
4. Language & Cognitive Development (LCD)
5. Communication Skills & General Knowledge (CGK)

Results 2: Children with FASD score significantly lower on all developmental domains than typically developing children

Results 3: FASD-C scores significantly lower on all developmental domains except emotional maturity

CONCLUSIONS

• Children with FASD and comorbidities possess unique behavioural profiles and can be distinguished from children who only have FASD.
• Comorbidities negatively impact the development of children with FASD.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

• Investigate FASD in additional provinces.
• Examine and compare the effects of specific disorders on FASD.
• Investigate the rates at which disorders tend to co-occur with FASD.

REFERENCES