



Alcohol and Pregnancy & FASD Research Team



PREVENTION



DIAGNOSIS



THERAPY & MANAGEMENT

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Midwives and Women Audit C Intervention Project

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is characterised by brain damage from prenatal alcohol exposure, the effects are lifelong and may not be seen at birth.

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Midwives are a crucial health provider in the area of raising awareness and providing preventive education and information to women regarding alcohol use in pregnancy.

Research indicates that health professionals, including midwives, are not always confident in using screening tools and providing brief interventions in the clinical setting.

In a previous project midwives asked for professional development about alcohol consumption during pregnancy, FASD, and conducting brief interventions. [Read more about this project](#)

What is this research about?

This project was designed to improve the capacity of midwives working in antenatal settings to use the pregnancy specific Audit-C alcohol risk screening tool (assessing risk of harm from alcohol use) with pregnant women, and provide guidance (a brief intervention) to them about the effects of alcohol use on the developing baby. Additionally, readily available resources were identified for midwives to provide them with a range of educational resources to provide to women.

The main project outcome was a Learning Package for midwives outlining the rationale for conducting Audit-C screening in pregnancy, the key elements involved in conducting a brief educational intervention and a comprehensive list of relevant professional educational resources.

Even when relatively low risk alcohol use is identified in pregnancy, the Audit-C screening tool provides an opportunity to educate all pregnant women about the National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines regarding the use of alcohol in pregnancy. The advice is “No alcohol in pregnancy is the safest option” and has been in place since 2009.

What did we do?

- Conducted group discussions and individual interviews with women with current or recent experience of maternity care in various settings in Perth metropolitan locations.
- Conducted group discussions and individual interviews with midwives working in a variety of roles in a public hospital.

- Developed a learning package for midwives that includes:
 - Four self-directed learning modules about FASD, understanding and using AUDIT-C, brief interventions and breastfeeding and alcohol.
 - A printable handy prompt guide for using the Women-Held Pregnancy Record AUDIT-C screening tool and brief intervention in maternity care
 - links to additional resources and other online education

Who conducted this research?

Researchers

- Dr Tracy Reibel
- Dr Roslyn Giglia
- Professor Carol Bower

We worked closely with Armadale Health Service as the pilot site for the intervention.

How were consumers and the community involved in this research?

The Expert Group formed for the project included a Consumer Representative.

Additionally, women in the community participated in group discussions and individual interviews and were asked about:

- their experience of being asked about alcohol use
- acceptability and use of Audit C
- social practices associated with alcohol use or avoidance in pregnancy

How will this research help?

- This project has produced and evaluated a learning package for midwives which will contribute to their professional knowledge of alcohol in pregnancy and the role that midwives play in educating women on this important health topic.

What are we doing next?

- A state-wide implementation strategy to distribute the learning package to all public health maternity services is being developed in consultation with the WA Department of Health.

This project is part of the [3M FASD Prevention Strategy: Marulu, Mass Media and Midwives](#)

This project is funded by the WA Department of Health

Alcohol and Pregnancy & FASD Research Team at Telethon Kids Institute

We have a comprehensive program of research in partnership with community & stakeholders to achieve our goals of developing prevention strategies; building the capacity of health, justice and other professionals to recognise and diagnose FASD; and implementing and evaluating programs for children and young people with FASD and their families.

For information on alcohol & pregnancy, FASD, our research projects, resources and publications visit our website: www.alcoholpregnancy.telethonkids.org.au

There is no safe time or amount of alcohol to drink while planning a pregnancy, when pregnant and when breastfeeding which is why the Australian Guidelines state 'not drinking alcohol is the safest choice'.

