
The Daily Telegraph

Local

One in five mums-to-be still drinking

Sue Dunlevy

293 words

12 September 2012

Daily Telegraph

DAITEL

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17

English

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DESPITE widespread public health warnings, hundreds of babies are

being born every year with brain damage, poor memory, language, communication and social skills because one in five women continue to drink during pregnancy.

As a parliamentary committee is due to report on the problem and alcohol manufacturers are under pressure to introduce pregnancy warnings on their bottles, experts have drawn up a \$37 million management plan for foetal alcohol problems they will take to the federal government today.

The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education** (FARE) wants to spend over \$10 million on a public education campaign to educate women about the risk, establish three foetal alcohol diagnostic clinics across Australia and set up research programs into the problem.

Foetal alcohol spectrum disorder is the most common preventable cause of intellectual impairment in Australia, yet its incidence goes unreported, there's no funding to deal with its consequences and only 20 per cent of doctors can identify it.

National Health and Medical Research Guidelines were changed in 2009 and now state, "for women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, not drinking is the safest option". But research by FARE found only 5 per cent of Australians were familiar with the guidelines.

Recent research shows almost half of all pregnant women drank before knowing they were pregnant

and 19.5 per cent continued to drink alcohol once they became aware of their pregnancy.

University of Sydney Professor Elizabeth Elliott said only a third of mothers could recall their doctor speaking to them about alcohol use during their pregnancy. Most doctors can't identify foetal alcohol syndrome and many cases are misdiagnosed as ADHD or autism because they have similar symptoms, she said.

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The Advertiser

News

Pregnant women defy drink warnings

SUE DUNLEVY

515 words

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English

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HUNDREDS of babies are born every year with brain damage that leads to poor memory, language, communication and social skills because one in five women continue to drink during pregnancy, despite decades of widespread public health warnings on the danger.

With a parliamentary committee due to report on the problem and alcohol manufacturers under pressure to introduce pregnancy warnings on containers, experts have drawn up a \$37 million management plan for foetal alcohol problems they will take to the government today. The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education** (FARE) wants to spend more than \$10 million on a public education campaign to educate women about the risk, establish three foetal alcohol diagnostic clinics across Australia and set up research programs. Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is the most common preventable cause of intellectual impairment in Australia, yet its incidence goes mostly unreported.

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Mums keep drinking

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There is no funding to deal with the disorder's consequences and only 20 per cent of doctors can identify it.

National Health and Medical Research Guidelines were changed in 2009 and now state: ``For women

who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, not drinking is the safest option" but research by FARE found three years on, only five per cent of Australians were familiar with the guidelines.

Recent research shows almost half of all pregnant women drank before knowing they were pregnant and 19.5 per cent continued to drink alcohol once they became aware of their pregnancy.

A leading expert in the field, University of Sydney's Professor Elizabeth Elliott, says only a third of mothers could recall their doctor speaking to them about alcohol use during their pregnancy.

The majority of doctors can't identify foetal alcohol syndrome and many cases are misdiagnosed as ADHD or autism because they have similar symptoms, she says.

Conservative estimates suggest 200 children a year are born with foetal alcohol syndrome but experts believe the prevalence is much higher.

At the severe end of the spectrum, babies with FASD have distinct facial features and brain abnormalities. At the other end, the children have behavioural and brain function problems.

Alcohol manufacturers have agreed to introduce pregnancy warnings on containers ahead of compulsory labelling in two years' time.

However an independent audit published last month found that a year after that agreement, fewer than one in six (16 per cent) of alcohol products carry the messages.

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StreetTalk, Voteline

HOW THE GUIDELINES HAVE CHANGED

2001: Women who are pregnant may consider not drinking at all, should never become intoxicated; if they choose to drink should have less than seven standard drinks a week and no more than two drinks a day, should note that the risk is highest in the earlier stages of pregnancy.

2009: Maternal alcohol consumption can harm the developing foetus or breastfeeding baby. For women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, not drinking is the safest option. For women who are breastfeeding, not drinking is the safest option.

SOURCE: NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Document ADVTSR0020120911e89c0002u

Alcohol in pregnancy warning; \$37m sought to manage disorder

Peter Jean Health Reporter

476 words

12 September 2012

Canberra Times

CANBTZ

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English

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Alcohol in pregnancy warning

HELP: Sue Miers, left, whose foster child suffered foetal alcohol disorder, and Professor Elizabeth Elliott. Photo: JAY CRONAN Peter Jean Health Reporter

\$37m sought to manage disorder

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can be more damaging to an unborn child than smoking or consuming other potential toxins, according to a leading expert on foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Health experts will today meet with 50 federal politicians in Canberra to urge them to support a \$37million plan to prevent and treat foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, which is the most common preventable cause of developmental disability in Australia. Professor Elizabeth Elliott, a paediatrician who works at the University of Sydney and The Children's Hospital at Westmead, said many women and health professionals were unaware of the damage alcohol could cause to a developing foetus. "It's a nasty toxin and it's much nastier than a lot of the other things that people worry about in pregnancy like soft cheeses, or pates or smoking. They don't cause this kind

of permanent brain damage, although they can cause nasty infections, etc," she said. Professor Elliott said the disorder was often undiagnosed but could cause lifelong problems for sufferers.

"At the end of the day these children have problems with learning, behaviour, development, growth and really often require a tremendous amount of support from education and from the society."

Adelaide mother Sue Miers realised there was something unusual about her 21-month-old foster daughter soon after she began caring for her. Ms Miers said the girl could not learn from her mistakes.

"Cause and consequences - touching a hot stove every day and going back and doing it again and again, no matter what you said how you told her. Not learning from her mistakes, really hypersensitive

to noise, to touch," she said. Ms Miers read an article about foetal alcohol syndrome when the girl was 10 years old and unsuccessfully sought a medical diagnosis and assistance. In the end she had to travel to Canada to get medical help. Ms Mier's foster daughter is now in her 30s and still requires ongoing support. The action plan developed by the **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education** calls for a national education program about the dangers of drinking during pregnancy, warning labels on alcohol containers and improved diagnosis and support for sufferers of the disorder. Foundation chief executive Michael Thorn said the disorder was hidden a disability which the government had the opportunity to bring to community attention. "Government can move swiftly to adopt the plan's recommendations by staying the course on its commitment to introduce mandatory pregnancy alcohol warning labels, adopting the FASD diagnostic instrument and by funding FASD services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme," Mr Thorn said.

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NEWS

Babies pay for bad habits Drinking mums hand kids a lifelong sentence

Sue Dunlevy

346 words

12 September 2012

Herald-Sun

HERSUN

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English

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PREGNANT mums who won't quit drinking are giving birth to brain-damaged babies who develop learning and social disorders.

Experts say, despite health warnings, one in five women continues to drink during pregnancy and hundreds of babies are born each year with undiagnosed brain impairment.

The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education** has have drawn up a \$37 million management plan to tackle foetal alcohol problems, which they will present to the Federal Government today.

They want to spend more than \$10 million on a campaign to drive home the message that women who drink while pregnant can cause brain damage in their unborn babies.

They also want to set up three diagnostic clinics across Australia and a series of research programs.

Researchers say Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is the most common preventable cause of intellectual impairment in Australia.

But it usually goes unreported, there is no funding to deal with its consequences and only 20 per cent of doctors can identify it when they see it.

At the severe end of the spectrum, babies with FASD have distinct facial markers and brain abnormalities. At the other end they have behavioural and brain function problems including poor memory, language and social skills.

Recent research showed almost half of all pregnant women drank before knowing they were pregnant and 19.5 per cent continued to drink alcohol once they became aware of their pregnancy, despite national health guidelines advising them not to.

University of Sydney Professor Elizabeth Elliott said most doctors couldn't identify FASD and many cases were misdiagnosed as ADHD or autism because they had similar symptoms.

Conservative estimates suggest 200 children a year are born with alcohol damage. Alcohol manufacturers have agreed to introduce pregnancy warnings on bottles ahead of compulsory labelling in two years time.

However, an independent audit of the alcohol industry's DrinkWise campaign found that a full year after the initiative was launched, less than one in six alcohol products carried the consumer messages.

Document HERSUN0020120911e89c0002y

[Babies pay for drinking mums' habits](#)

PerthNow, 11:00, 11 September 2012, 382 words, (English)

What are these? PREGNANT mums who won't quit drinking are giving birth to brain-damaged babies who develop learning and social disorders. Experts say, despite health warnings, one in five women continues to drink during pregnancy and hundreds ...