

https://dspace.org/

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) from infancy to childhood: neuropsychological development and maternal depression

Chetty-Makkan, Candice Maylene

2012-07-16
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/11687

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a preventable cause of intellectual delay. Highly prevalent in South Africa, it has become a public health concern. Effective screening measures to identify women at risk of producing a FASD child is therefore important. This study postulated that a distinctive maternal profile may exist for mothers with FASD infants compared to a comparison group. Consequently, the study investigated the occurrence of maternal depression and its potential association with maternal risk factors and infant development respectively; differences in the profiles of mothers; as well as developmental differences in FASD and No FASD groups of children. An ex-post facto design was implemented, where the sample comprised of dyads that completed initial (infants 9-18 months) and follow-up (children 18-45 months) assessments. Severity of maternal depression (measured on the Beck Depression Inventory); maternal current mood states (measured on the Profile of Mood States) and infant developmental differences (measured with the Griffiths Mental Developmental Scales) were assessed. The results showed no distinct patterns in maternal depression in the FASD versus the No FASD groups; maternal depression was not significantly correlated with infant development; infants with FASD showed impaired overall development, with especially poor social adjustment; and all infants (FASD and No FASD) performed lower than the expected developmental norms. Maternal alcohol use was the only significant covariate associated with infant development. Identifying the predictors of high risk behaviour during pregnancy is complex, where prenatal alcohol exposure cannot be viewed in isolation from contextual factors, as limited resources, historical factors, cultural/community knowledge, a lack of stimulation and malnutrition prevail in many areas of South Africa. Profiling maternal predisposition to prenatal

alcohol use is essential in reducing the incidence of FASD in South Africa and implementing social skills intervention programs could aid the long-term adjustment of FASD infants.

Keywords: Prenatal alcohol exposure; maternal risk factors; maternal depression; infant development; South Africa