



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

FASD | Fetal Alcohol
Spectrum Disorder
AR | Australian Registry

Biannual Data Summary Report

December 2023

National surveillance of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

1 January 2015 to 31 December 2023

The FASDAR houses national surveillance of de-identified cases of FASD in children aged less than 15 years by the APSU. From study inception on 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2023, 1573 notifications of FASD have been made to the APSU, 1480 (94.1%) of these notifications had a case report form providing sufficient FASD data. After internal verification of data, there were 1172 confirmed cases of FASD during this period.

Sociodemographics

The median age of diagnosis was 8.5 years, with the majority of the sample being male, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and in foster care. Notified cases were from Western Australia (24.4%), New South Wales (22.5%), Queensland (21.3%), Victoria (16.7%), Northern Territory (9.8%), South Australia (3.3%), Tasmania (1.1%), and Australian Capital Territory (0.8%). Half of the children lived in major cities (49.7%), and remote/very remote areas were overrepresented (17.8%).

FASD diagnosis

Approximately 17% of children (17.2%) were diagnosed with FASD with 3 sentinel facial features and approximately one-fifth (20.8%) had microcephaly.

Prenatal alcohol exposure

Prenatal alcohol exposure was confirmed in the vast majority of children (97.4%). Most had high or very high-risk prenatal alcohol exposure (69.0%).

Neurodevelopment

The most common domains of severe neurodevelopmental impairment were attention (80.3%); executive function, including impulse control and hyperactivity (77.5%); adaptive behaviour, social skills or social communication (74.5%); language (64.3%); academic achievement (64.1%); cognition (48.7%); and motor skills (42.6%).

Comorbidities

Comorbidities were frequently reported, the most common being attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (70.2%), communication disorders (54.6%), trauma, stress-related or attachment disorders (43.5%), motor disorders (30.3%), sleep disorders (28.7%), anxiety (28.1%), intellectual disabilities (25.6%), and specific learning disorders (21.8%).

Acknowledgements

Australian Government Department of Health FASD Australian Registry Grant
Australian Paediatric Surveillance Unit (ASPU) staff
FASDAR National Steering Group
The University of Sydney
Clinicians who report cases to APSU/FASDAR

Suggested citation

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Australian Registry (FASDAR). Biannual Data Summary Report – December 2023. The University of Sydney, Westmead, Australia. 2023. Available at: <http://www.fasregistry.org.au>.

Contact

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Australian Registry (FASDAR)

Professor Elizabeth Elliott
Chief Investigator

Dr Tracey W. Tsang
Senior Research Fellow & Registry Manager
tracey.tsang@sydney.edu.au

Australian Paediatric Surveillance Unit
Locked Bag 4001
Westmead 2145, NSW Australia

fasregistry.org.au
sydney.edu.au

CRICOS 00026A



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY