



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY



## Biannual Data Summary Report

December 2024

# National surveillance of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

1 January 2015 to 31 December 2024

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 2024, 1816 notifications of FASD have been made to the APSU, 1693 (93.2%) of these notifications had a case report form providing sufficient FASD data. After internal verification of data, there were 1374 confirmed cases of FASD during this period.

## **Sociodemographics**

The median age of diagnosis was 8.6 years, with the majority of the sample being male, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and in foster care. Notified cases were from New South Wales (23.1%), Victoria (21.1%), Western Australia (21.0%), Queensland (19.3%), Northern Territory (8.5%), South Australia (4.1%), Tasmania (2.1%), and Australian Capital Territory (0.8%). Half of the children lived in major cities (49.4%), and remote/very remote areas were overrepresented (16.4%).

## **FASD diagnosis**

Approximately 17% of children (16.5%) were diagnosed with FASD with 3 sentinel facial features and just below one-fifth (18.2%) had microcephaly.

## **Prenatal alcohol exposure**

Prenatal alcohol exposure was confirmed in the vast majority of children (97.0%) with most having high or very high-risk prenatal alcohol exposure.

## **Neurodevelopment**

The most common domains of severe neurodevelopmental impairment were attention (81.2%); executive function, including impulse control and hyperactivity (75.9%); adaptive behaviour, social skills or social communication (74.2%); language (63.7%); academic achievement (60.9%); cognition (48.7%); and motor skills (44.6%).

## **Comorbidities**

Comorbidities were frequently reported, the most common being attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (69.9%), communication disorders (56.3%), trauma, stress-related or attachment disorders (43.1%), motor disorders (30.0%), sleep disorders (27.7%), anxiety (27.5%), intellectual disabilities (25.0%), specific learning disorders (20.9%) and autism spectrum disorder (20.3%).

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