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*Edited by Edward P. Riley, Sterling Clarren,  
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## **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**

Management and Policy Perspectives of FASD

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

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**Library of Congress Card No.:** applied for

### **British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

### **Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <<http://dnb.d-nb.de>>.

© 2011 Wiley-VCH Verlag & Co. KGaA,  
Boschstr. 12, 69469 Weinheim, Germany

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**Typesetting** Toppan Best-set Premedia Ltd,  
Hong Kong

**Printing and Binding** Fabulous Printers Pte Ltd,  
Singapore

**Cover Design** Adam-Design, Weinheim

Printed in the Federal Republic of Germany  
Printed on acid-free paper

**ISBN:** 978-3-527-32839-0

**ISSN:** 1864-9947

## Contents

**Preface** XVII  
**List of Contributors** XIX

**1 Prenatal Alcohol Exposure, FAS, and FASD:**  
**An Introduction** 1  
*Tanya T. Nguyen, Jennifer Coppens, and Edward P. Riley*

1.1 Introduction 1  
1.2 History 2  
1.3 Diagnosing the Effects of Prenatal Alcohol Exposure 3  
1.3.1 Fetal Alcohol Syndrome 3  
1.3.2 Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder(s) 4  
1.4 Risk factors influencing FAS and FASD Conditions 4  
1.5 Prevalence and Impact of FAS and FASD 5  
1.6 Prevention 7  
1.7 Interventions 8  
Acknowledgments 10  
References 10

**Part One Incidence, Prevalence, and Economic Aspects of FASD** 15

**2 Researching the Prevalence and Characteristics of FASD in International Settings** 17  
*Philip A. May*

2.1 Introduction 17  
2.2 Maternal Risk Factors and FASD 17  
2.3 Determining the Prevalence of FASD: How the Methods Have Influenced the Rates 20  
2.4 The Prevalence of FASD from In-School Studies 21  
2.5 Summary Rates of FASD and Their Meaning 22  
References 24

<b>3</b>	<b>Frequency of FASD in Canada, and What This Means for Prevention Efforts</b>	<b>27</b>
	<i>Suzanne C. Tough and Monica Jack</i>	
3.1	Introduction	27
3.2	Challenges to Obtaining Accurate Incidence and Prevalence Rates	27
3.3	Incidence of FASD	29
3.3.1	National Rates in Canada (see Box 3.1)	29
3.3.2	Provincial Rates in Canada	30
3.3.2.1	British Columbia	30
3.3.2.2	Alberta	30
3.3.2.3	Saskatchewan	30
3.3.2.4	Manitoba	31
3.3.2.5	Other Provinces	31
3.4	Prevalence of FASD	31
3.4.1	Child Welfare Systems	31
3.4.2	Corrections Systems	33
3.4.3	Aboriginal Communities	34
3.5	Rate of Exposure to Risk	35
3.6	Gaps in the Data	37
3.7	Policy Considerations	37
3.7.1	Establish Baseline Rates of FAS/FASD and Track Them Over Time	37
3.7.2	Continue with Intervention Efforts	38
3.7.3	Assess and Intervene in Areas with Higher FAS/FASD Frequency	38
3.7.4	Intervene to Prevent FAS/FASD Where Risk is Higher	39
3.7.5	Work Towards Developing a Consistent Message	40
3.7.6	Key Players	40
3.8	Conclusions	41
	Acknowledgments	41
	References	41
<b>4</b>	<b>Costs of FASD</b>	<b>45</b>
	<i>Nguyen Xuan Thanh, Egon Jonsson, Liz Dennett, and Philip Jacobs</i>	
4.1	Introduction	45
4.2	Methods	46
4.2.1	Literature Search	46
4.2.2	Inclusion Criteria	46
4.2.3	Cost Adjustment	47
4.3	Results	47
4.3.1	Search Results	47
4.3.2	Summary of Studies Included in the Review	47
4.3.3	Summary of Methods Used in the Reviewed Studies	49
4.3.4	Summary of Results of the Reviewed Studies	51

- 4.3.4.1 Annual Cost of FAS/FASD for the US, Canada, and the Province of Alberta 51
- 4.3.4.2 Annual Cost per Case 55
- 4.3.4.3 Lifetime Cost per Case 56
- 4.4 Discussion 57
- 4.5 Conclusion 58
- 4.6 Appendices to Chapter 4 59
- 4.6.1 Appendix 1: Search Strategy 59
- 4.6.2 Appendix 2: Summary of Included Studies 64
- 4.6.3 Appendix 3: Excluded studies that consider the costs of FAS/FASD 68
- References 68

## **Part Two Causes and Diagnosing of FASD 71**

### **5 Direct and Indirect Mechanisms of Alcohol Teratogenesis: Implications for Understanding Alterations in Brain and Behavior in FASD 73**

*Kristina A. Uban, Tamara Bodnar, Kelly Butts, Joanna H. Sliwowska, Wendy Comeau, and Joanne Weinberg*

- 5.1 Introduction 73
- 5.1.1 Mechanisms of Alcohol's Teratogenic Effects 73
- 5.1.2 Direct Mechanisms of Alcohol's Actions on the Fetus 74
- 5.1.3 Indirect Mechanisms of Alcohol's Actions on the Fetus 75
- 5.1.3.1 Alcohol Effects on Prostaglandins 76
- 5.1.3.2 Alcohol-Induced Disruption of Cell–Cell Interactions or Cell Adhesion 76
- 5.1.3.3 Alcohol and Oxidative Stress 76
- 5.1.3.4 Disruption of Endocrine Balance 77
- 5.1.4 Neurobiology of Stress 78
- 5.1.5 FASD and Stress Responsiveness 81
- 5.2 Fetal Programming: Programming of the HPA Axis by PAE 82
- 5.3 Altered Epigenetic Regulation of Gene Expression: A Possible Mechanism Underlying Fetal Programming of the HPA Axis and Altered Neuroendocrine-Immune Interactions 84
- 5.4 Prenatal Alcohol Exposure: Early Experience, Stress Responsiveness, and Vulnerability to Depression 87
- 5.4.1 Interactions Between Central Monoaminergic Neurotransmitters and the HPA Axis 88
- 5.4.2 FASD, Stress, and Depression 89
- 5.4.3 Prevention and Treatment of Depression in FASD Populations 90
- 5.5 FASD and Substance Abuse 91
- 5.5.1 Neurobiology of Addiction 91
- 5.5.2 Stress and Substance Use 92
- 5.6 Summary and Policy Considerations 93
- Acknowledgments 94

Glossary	94
Abbreviations	97
References	98

## **6 Genetic Factors Contributing to FASD 109**

*Albert E. Chudley*

6.1	Introduction	109
6.2	The Evidence	110
6.3	Genetic Factors in Alcohol Metabolism	111
6.4	Some Genetic Factors	115
6.5	Epigenetics, the Environment and Nutrition	116
6.6	Conclusions, and Some Policy Recommendations	118
6.7	Glossary	119
	References	123

## **7 Diagnosis of FASD: An Overview 127**

*Gail Andrew*

7.1	History of Diagnosing FASD	128
7.2	How Does Prenatal Alcohol Exposure Cause Damage?	130
7.3	Screening for FASD	131
7.4	The Diagnostic Process	133
7.5	FASD Across the Lifespan	136
7.5.1	Diagnosis in the Neonatal Period and Early Infancy	137
7.5.2	Diagnosing in Toddlerhood	138
7.5.3	Diagnosing in School Age	138
7.5.4	Diagnosing in Adolescence and Adulthood	140
7.6	Implications of a Diagnosis of FASD	140
7.7	Conclusion and Future Directions	141
7.8	Policy Considerations	142
	References	142

## **Part Three Prevention Policies and Programs 149**

### **8 FASD: A Preconception Prevention Initiative 151**

*Lola Baydala, Stephanie Worrell, and Fay Fletcher*

8.1	Introduction	151
8.2	Prevention Strategies	151
8.2.1	The National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practice	152
8.2.2	LifeSkills Training	152
8.2.3	The Alexis Working Committee	153
8.2.4	The Adaptations Committee	154
8.2.5	Community Member Participation	155
8.3	Research Relationships	155
8.3.1	Capacity Building	156
8.4	The CIHR Guidelines for Research Involving Aboriginal People	156



8.5	Summary	157
	Acknowledgments	158
	References	158
<b>9</b>	<b>Bringing a Women's Health Perspective to FASD Prevention</b>	<b>161</b>
	<i>Nancy Poole</i>	
9.1	Introduction	161
9.2	Applying Gender-Based Analysis to FASD Prevention	162
9.3	Developing a Framework for Women-Centered Prevention Practice	163
9.3.1	Women-Centered Care	165
9.3.2	Harm-Reduction Orientation	165
9.3.3	Collaborative Care	166
9.4	Evidencing the Framework	166
9.4.1	Research on Women-Centered, Trauma-Informed Care	167
9.4.2	Research on Harm-Reduction Practice	168
9.4.3	Research on Collaborative Care	169
9.5	Conclusions	170
	References	171
<b>10</b>	<b>Next Steps in FASD Primary Prevention</b>	<b>175</b>
	<i>Robin Thurmeier, Sameer Deshpande, Anne Lavack, Noreen Agrey, and Magdalena Cismaru</i>	
10.1	Introduction	175
10.2	Current State of FASD Primary Prevention in North-Western Canada	176
10.2.1	The Born Free Campaign	178
10.2.2	The Mother Kangaroo Campaign	180
10.2.3	The With Child/Without Alcohol Campaign	181
10.2.4	Summary of Results	181
10.3	Campaign Evaluation: What Is It and Why It Is Important	182
10.4	Incorporating Social Marketing Strategies	184
10.5	Creating Behavioral Change: Protection Motivation Theory	185
10.6	Future Considerations for Health Promoters and Policy Makers	188
	References	189
<b>11</b>	<b>Preventing FASD: The Parent–Child Assistance Program (PCAP) Intervention with High-Risk Mothers</b>	<b>193</b>
	<i>Therese M. Grant</i>	
11.1	Introduction	193
11.2	FASD Prevention	193
11.3	Background	194
11.4	The PCAP Intervention	195
11.4.1	Relational Theory	195
11.4.2	Stages-of-Change	196

- 11.4.3 Harm Reduction 197
- 11.5 PCAP: A Two-Pronged Intervention 197
  - 11.5.1 Between the Client and the Case Manager 197
    - 11.5.1.1 Establishing Trust 197
    - 11.5.1.2 Working with the Family 197
    - 11.5.1.3 Role-Modeling 198
  - 11.5.2 Between the Client and the Community Service Providers 198
- 11.6 Preventing Alcohol- and/or Drug-Exposed Births 199
  - 11.6.1 Substance Abuse Treatment 199
  - 11.6.2 Family Planning 199
- 11.7 PCAP Outcomes 200
- 11.8 PCAP Cost Effectiveness 201
- 11.9 PCAP Intervention with Women who Themselves Have FASD 201
- 11.10 Policy Recommendations: Collaborative Approaches for Preventing Alcohol-Exposed Pregnancies 202
  - References 204

**12 FASD in the Perspective of Primary Healthcare 207**

*June Bergman*

- 12.1 Primary Care Approaches to FASD 208
- 12.2 Barriers to Screening 210
- 12.3 Impact of Healthcare Reform 211
  - Reference 212

**Part Four FASD and the Legal System 213**

**13 The Manitoba FASD Youth Justice Program: Addressing Criminal Justice Issues 215**

*Mary Kate Harvie, Sally E.A. Longstaffe, and Albert E. Chudley*

- 13.1 Introduction 215
- 13.2 The Legislative Context 216
- 13.3 The Information Gap 217
- 13.4 The Manitoba FASD Youth Justice Program 220
- 13.5 Screening 221
- 13.6 The Preassessment Period 222
- 13.7 Medical Assessment 222
- 13.8 The Doctor's Report and Its Use 223
- 13.9 Sentencing Conferences 224
- 13.10 The Sentencing Process 225
- 13.11 The Statistical Outcomes 225
- 13.12 One-Day Snap-Shot of Age of Majority Youth (28 February 2010) 226
- 13.13 Other Initiatives 226
  - 13.13.1 "This is Me" 226

13.13.2	This is Me Life Books	227
13.13.3	The Icons Project	227
13.13.4	Youth Accommodation Counsel	229
13.14	Strengths and Challenges	229
	References	231
<b>14</b>	<b>Understanding FASD: Disability and Social Supports for Adult Offenders</b>	<b>233</b>
	<i>E. Sharon Brintnell, Patricia G. Bailey, Anjili Sawhney, Laura Kreftin</i>	
14.1	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a Disability	234
14.1.1	Primary Disabilities Associated with FASD	234
14.1.2	Secondary Disabilities Associated with FASD	235
14.1.3	The Social Determinants of Health and FASD	236
14.1.4	Human Rights and FASD	237
14.1.5	Incarceration and FASD	237
14.2	Correctional Environment in Canada for Adults with FASD	238
14.2.1	Treatment Programs	240
14.2.2	Recidivism and Alternative Sentencing	240
14.2.3	Release Planning	242
14.2.4	Correctional System Needs	243
14.3	Interventions and Social Supports for Adults with FASD after Release	244
14.3.1	Client-Centered Lifelong Multisectoral Supports	245
14.3.2	Employment and Housing	246
14.3.3	Training and Programs	247
14.3.4	External Executive Function Support	248
14.3.5	FASD Costs	249
14.3.6	Developmental Disability Assistance	250
14.4	Policy Considerations for Adults with FASD	251
	References	253
<b>15</b>	<b>Policy Development in FASD for Individuals and Families Across the Lifespan</b>	<b>259</b>
	<i>Dorothy Badry and Aileen Wight Felske</i>	
15.1	Introduction	259
15.2	Birth	261
15.3	Childhood	261
15.4	Adolescence/Teenage Years	264
15.5	Adulthood	265
15.6	A Disability Paradigm for FASD	267
15.7	Cultural Fairness	268
15.8	Life Trajectory Policy Model	269
15.9	Conclusions	270
	References	271

<b>16</b>	<b>The Impact of FASD: Children with FASD Involved with the Manitoba Child Welfare System</b> 275
	<i>Linda Burnside, Don Fuchs, Shelagh Marchenski, Andria Mudry, Linda De Riviere, Marni Brownell, and Matthew Dahl</i>
16.1	Introduction 275
16.2	Study One: Children in Care with Disabilities 277
16.3	Study Two: The Trajectory of Care for Children with FASD 278
16.4	Study Three: Youth with FASD Leaving Care 280
16.5	Study Four: The Cost of Child Welfare Care for Children with FASD 282
16.6	Study Five: Economic Impact of FASD for Children in Care 284
16.7	Conclusions 292
	References 293
<b>17</b>	<b>British Columbia's Key Worker and Parent Support Program: Evaluation Highlights and Implications for Practice and Policy</b> 297
	<i>Deborah Rutman, Carol Hubberstey, and Sharon Hume</i>
17.1	Introduction 297
17.2	Background 297
17.3	Program Model and Components 298
17.4	Literature 299
17.5	Evaluation Methods 300
17.6	Formative Evaluation Findings 301
17.6.1	Activities and Role of the Key Worker 303
17.6.2	Regional and Provincial Supports for Key Workers 305
17.6.3	Parents', Caregivers' and Community Partners' Perceptions of the Program 307
17.6.4	Program Challenges 308
17.7	Summative Evaluation Findings 309
17.7.1	Increased Knowledge about FASD 309
17.7.2	Shifts in Parenting Strategies and Responses 310
17.7.3	Feeling Supported 310
17.7.4	Increased Access to Services and Resources 311
17.8	Discussion 311
17.8.1	Promising Practices 312
17.9	Policy Considerations 313
17.10	Conclusions 314
	References 315
<b>18</b>	<b>FASD and Education Policy: Issues and Directions</b> 317
	<i>Elizabeth Bredberg</i>
18.1	Introduction 317
18.2	Where Do Students with FASD Fit Into the Education System? 318
18.2.1	Eligibility 319
18.2.2	Exclusion and Discipline 319

18.2.3	Accountability: Curriculum and Learning Outcomes	320
18.3	Students with FASD within Special Education Systems	320
18.4	Education Professionals and FASD	321
18.5	Inter-Agency and Community Supports for Students with FASD	322
18.6	Policy indications	322
18.7	Conclusions	325
	References	325
<b>19</b>	<b>Shifting Responsibility from the Individual to the Community</b>	<b>327</b>
	<i>Audrey McFarlane</i>	
19.1	Introduction	327
19.2	Why Do We Need to Make a Shift?	327
19.3	Examples of Individual's Situations	328
19.4	One Model of Community of Care	330
19.4.1	Diagnosis	330
19.4.2	Prevention	332
19.4.3	Intervention	333
19.4.4	Outcomes	333
19.5	History	334
19.6	Future	335
19.7	Policy Considerations	336
19.8	Conclusions	337
	Acknowledgments	338
	References	338
<b>20</b>	<b>A Social Work Perspective on Policies to Prevent Alcohol Consumption during Pregnancy</b>	<b>339</b>
	<i>Mary Diana (Vandenbrink) Berube</i>	
	References	348
	Appendix to Chapter 20	350
<b>21</b>	<b>A Cross-Ministry Approach to FASD Across the Lifespan in Alberta</b>	<b>353</b>
	<i>Denise Milne, Tim Moorhouse, Kesa Shikaze, and Cross-Ministry Members</i>	
21.1	Introduction	353
21.2	The Impact of FASD	354
21.3	Overview of Strategies	356
21.4	FASD Service Network Program	356
21.5	Ministry Initiatives Based on the Strategic Plan	357
21.5.1	Awareness and Prevention	357
21.5.1.1	Parent-Child Assistance Program	357
21.5.1.2	Generating Awareness/Skills Development in Justice	358
21.5.2	Assessment and Diagnosis	358
21.5.2.1	Development of an Assessment and Diagnosis Model for Aboriginal and Remote Communities	358

21.5.2.2	Adult Assessment and Diagnosis Demonstration Project	359
21.5.2.3	Development of FASD Clinical Capacity	359
21.5.3	Supports for Individuals and Caregivers	360
21.5.3.1	Employment Supports for People Affected by FASD	360
21.5.3.2	Employment Supports and Services	361
21.5.3.3	FASD: Supporting Adults Gain and Maintain Employment	361
21.5.3.4	AVENTA Addiction Treatment for Women Demonstration Project	361
21.5.3.5	Kaleidoscope Demonstration Project	361
21.5.3.6	FASD Community Outreach Program Demonstration Project	361
21.5.3.7	Step-by-Step Demonstration Project	362
21.5.3.8	Well Communities–Well Families Demonstration Project	362
21.5.3.9	Service Coordination and Mentorship	362
21.5.3.10	FASD Videoconference Learning Series	362
21.5.3.11	Supports through Justice	363
21.5.3.12	First Nations and Inuit Supports	363
21.5.3.13	The WRaP (Wellness, Resiliency and Partnerships) Coaching Demonstration Project	363
21.5.4	Training and Education	364
21.5.4.1	Development of e-Learning Modules	364
21.5.4.2	Promising Practices, Promising Futures: Alberta FASD Conference 2009 and 2010	364
21.5.4.3	IHE Consensus Development Conference on FASD: Across the Lifespan	365
21.5.4.4	FASD Education and Training	365
21.5.4.5	Leading Practices Workshops	365
21.5.4.6	Building an Educated Workforce	365
21.5.5	Strategic Planning	366
21.5.6	Research and Evaluation	366
21.5.6.1	Corrections and Connections to Community	366
21.5.6.2	FASD Community of Practice Research	367
21.5.6.3	Research Project on School Experiences of Children with FASD	367
21.5.7	Stakeholder Engagement	367
	References	368
<b>22</b>	<b>Critical Considerations for Intervention Planning for Children with FASD</b>	<b>369</b>
	<i>John D. McLennan</i>	
22.1	Introduction	369
22.2	The Development of a Rational Service System for At-Risk Children	369
22.3	Factors Supporting the Development of Separate Specialized Services for Subgroups of At-Risk Children	370

- 22.3.1 What is the Prevalence of the Special Subpopulation? 370
- 22.3.2 What is the Prevalence of Specific Difficulties/Needs within the Special Subpopulation? 371
- 22.3.3 What Is the Attributable Risk of the Particular Disorder for These Specific Difficulties? 371
- 22.3.4 What Is the Effectiveness of Interventions for the Subpopulation? 372
- 22.3.5 Is There Evidence for Unique Benefits to Support Separating Out Services for the Subpopulation? 372
- 22.3.6 Are There Risks in Delivering Services Separately for the Subpopulation? 372
- 22.4 Should Separate Specialized Services Be Developed for Children with FASD? 372
- 22.4.1 What Is the Prevalence of FASD? 372
- 22.4.2 What Is the Prevalence of Specific Difficulties/Needs within a Population of Children with FASD? 373
- 22.4.3 What Is the Attributable risk of FASD for these Specific Difficulties? 375
- 22.4.4 What Is the Effectiveness of Interventions for FASD? 378
- 22.4.5 Is There Evidence for Unique Benefits to Support Separating-Out Services for Children with FASD? 379
- 22.4.6 Are There Risks in Delivering Services Separately for Children with FASD? 381
- 22.5 Policy Considerations: Strengthening the Service System for a Broader Range of Children At-Risk 383
- Acknowledgments 383
- References 383

## **Part Five Research Needed on FASD 387**

- 23 FASD Research in Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Prevention: Building the Next Generation of Health and Social Policy Responses 389**
- Amy Salmon and Sterling Clarren*
- 23.1 Introduction 389
- 23.2 Mapping Prevention: What Research is Needed Now, and Why? 390
- 23.2.1 Primary Prevention: Social Support and Determinants of Women's Health 390
- 23.2.2 Accurate Diagnosis of FASD: Preventing Secondary Disabilities and Reaching out to Mothers (and Potential Mothers) 393
- 23.3 Conclusions: Drawing a Road-Map for Integrated, Supportive, and Effective Care 396
- References 397

**24 Focusing Research Efforts: What Further Research into FASD is Needed? 399**

*Sara Jo Nixon, Robert A. Prather, and Rebecca J. Gilbertson*

24.1 Introduction 399

24.2 FASD and Heterogeneity: An Encouraging Outcome 399

24.3 Models: Moving Beyond Description 402

24.4 Applying Neuroscience: Beyond the Mother? 403

24.5 Summary 405

References 406

**Part Six Personal Views from People Living with FASD 411**

**25 Living with FASD 413**

*Myles Himmelreich*

**26 Charlene's Journey 419**

*Charlene Organ*

**Appendix: FASD Consensus Statement of the Jury 433**

Acknowledgments 433

Process 433

Conference Questions 434

Introduction 434

Question 1 434

Question 2 435

Question 3 436

Question 4 438

Question 5 439

Question 6 441

Conclusion 442

Jury Members 443

Conference Speakers and Topics 443

Planning Committee 446

Scientific Committee 447

Communications Committee 448

Disclosure Statement 448

Institute of Health Economics 448

IHE Board of Directors 448

Chair 448

Government 449

Academia 449

Industry 449

Other 449

CEO 449

FASD Research and Resources 450

**Index 451**



## Preface

In October 2009, the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) staged a consensus development conference to address key questions about the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Experts in the field presented scientific evidence to a “jury” about prevention and the social determinants that may induce drinking during pregnancy, the importance of diagnosis, the impact of FASD across a person’s lifespan, and the community supports needed for those living with FASD, as well as their families. After two days of hearings, the jury developed a statement which answered eight relevant and common questions about FASD, including suggested policy changes for enhanced prevention, and for improving the lives of people with FASD and their families. That statement is available in the Appendix of this book.

During the planning of that conference, IHE invited the experts—who included researchers, clinicians, economists, epidemiologists, social workers, and judicial workers—to expand on their speeches and write chapters for a book that would aim at a worldwide health policy-making audience. An overwhelming majority of the speakers were interested, and this book is the result of their hard work.

In addition to policy makers, this book is for anyone interested in FASD, including those with the condition, family members and other caregivers, researchers, clinicians and others in healthcare and social services, and the justice sector. The chapters describe the impact of FASD on the individual, their families and society, and the many complex issues involved in the condition’s prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. The book ends with personal accounts of life with FASD, written by Myles Himmelreich and Charlene Organ, that not only powerfully illustrate the challenges created by having FASD, but also serve as a reminder that FASD does not—and should never—define a person.

We would like to acknowledge the Government of Alberta FASD Cross-Ministry Committee, Canada Northwest FASD Partnership, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada for their financial support of the consensus development conference and the production of material to this book. We would also like to thank Minister Janis Tarchuk, who was Minister of Children and Youth Services at the time of the conference and Deputy Minister, Fay Orr, for their strong support. Special recognition should be given to Ms Denise Milne, who represented the Cross-Ministry Committee and assisted greatly in all aspects of the conference

preparations. We are very grateful to the Honorable Anne McLellan for serving as Chair of the Jury for the conference, to Dr Gail Andrew, who acted as the Scientific Chair, and Ms Nancy Reynolds who acted as moderator. Special mention should be made to the Honorable Iris Evans, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations for Alberta, who has been a tireless supporter of initiatives to improve the lives of those affected by FASD. We would also like to give special thanks to Gail Littlejohn for her support in the editing process of this publication.

On behalf of the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) ([www.ihe.ca](http://www.ihe.ca))

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