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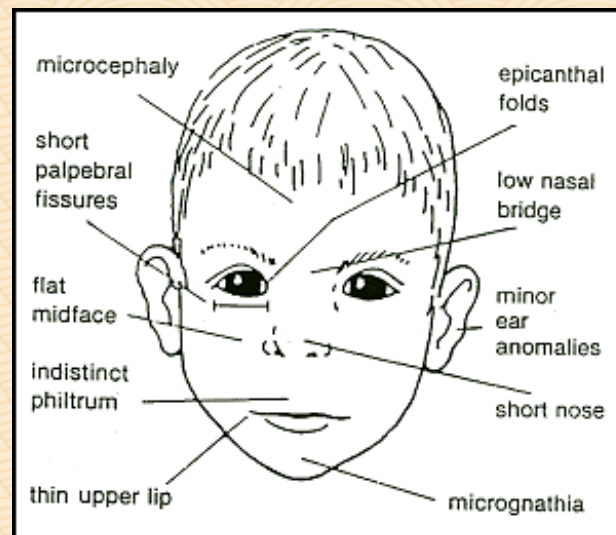


SEPTEMBER IS FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS (FASD) AWARENESS MONTH

by Vickie Comrie

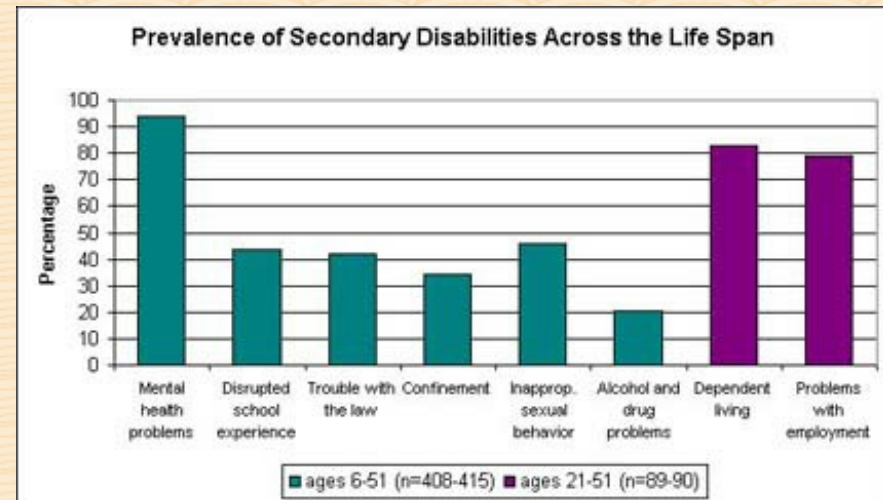
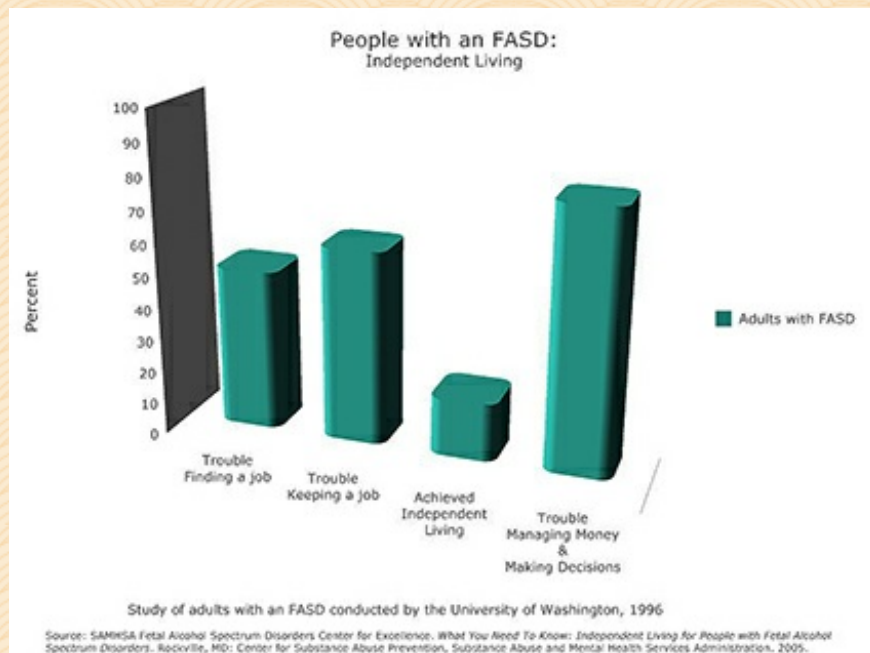
September 16, 2013 20:57 PST

Every year since 1999, September 9th has been recognized internationally as FASD Awareness Day; "Events are held at 9:09—the 9th minute of the 9th hour of the 9th day of the 9th month of the year. This date and time is used to remind women not to drink during the 9 months of pregnancy." Likewise, many states and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism recognize the entire month of September as a time to attempt interventions and spread information about the dangers of drinking and pregnancy. But unfortunately, it has been found that 1 in 13 women still drink while pregnant. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) were discovered in 1973, but in 2013, according to Kidshealth.org, "Alcohol (wine, beer, or liquor) is the leading known preventable cause of developmental and physical birth defects in the United States. When a woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy, she risks giving birth to a child who will pay the price — in mental and physical deficiencies — for his or her entire life."



FASD is an umbrella term that encompasses multiple disorders. Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), in which the child is most severely affected by the mother's drinking, currently affects 1 in every 750 infants born in the U.S.. FAS describes a recognizable, yet entirely preventable pattern of symptoms, including physical differences, developmental delays, and general functioning problems which can

include an IQ score significantly below normal. Fetal alcohol effects (FAE) occur in another 40,000 births each year and although the syndrome is generally milder, it still causes the child various degrees of difficulty in learning, memory, holding attention span and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and physical and emotional growth lag throughout their lifetime. Unfortunately, by the time many women discover that even one drink during pregnancy is one too many, it will already be too late to prevent their child from developing FASD--when the mother drinks, the fetus also drinks. Imagine this--the blood alcohol level for the mother, some 100+ pounds, is the same for the developing fetus, who may weigh a few ounces. Alcohol acts as a toxin to the developing fetus. According to NOFAS.org, 1 in 100 children born in the US each year have a disorder directly attributable to exposure to alcohol in the womb; this is the same number of children who are diagnosed with autism.



The only way to stop these devastating syndromes is to simply not drink at all during pregnancy. If you drank early in your pregnancy, before you knew you were pregnant, you can stop drinking now in order to curb the severity of these syndromes and perhaps prevent them entirely in your developing child. If you have drunk alcohol and discover you are pregnant, please see your doctor as soon as possible. He/She can monitor your fetus and can advise you on what steps to take next. If you wish to learn more about these disorders, please watch the videos posted below from NOFAS.org, or download any of the following printable PDFs:

If you have difficulty downloading any of the PDFs below, please update your Adobe Reader



If you are having trouble stopping drinking, or would like more information, please Contact Us, your doctor, use the Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator or any of the sources listed below.

Sources:

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/brain/fas.html>

<http://www.usd.edu/medical-school/center-for-disabilities/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorders-handbook.cfm>

<http://www.thearc.org/page.aspx?pid=2554>

Collaborative Initiative on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders CIFASD

September is FASD Awareness Month VIDEO