Manitoba Presenters Shine at Victoria Conference

The 3rd International Conference on FASD was held March 11–14, 2009, in Victoria, BC.

Participants and presenters from around the world attended to learn about the latest research findings and best practice models from doctors and service providers working in England, Ireland, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Uruguay, Uganda, the United States, and Canada.

Manitoba practitioners represented our province well. There were ten presentations from Manitoba and seven poster presentations. Here are some highlights from several of those presentations.

Alcohol Use During Pregnancy in Manitoba

M. Chartier, T. Mayer, J. Isbister

Understanding the extent and nature of alcohol use during pregnancy is essential for developing effective FASD prevention and support programs. Healthy Child Manitoba, in partnership with the Regional Health Authorities, attempts to screen all families with newborns in Manitoba for life challenges associated with poor child outcomes.

In 2007 and 2008, public health nurses collected information, without using names, from 24,702 women at the birth of their child. This information included the frequency and amount of alcohol used prior to and after pregnancy discovery. The
results show that 14.7% reported some alcohol use during pregnancy. This rate differed between the 11 health regions, ranging from 5.2% to 26.4%.

Among women who reported using alcohol during pregnancy, 82.1% stopped once they discovered that they were pregnant, and 17.9% reduced or continued their use at the same level.

While experts advise that there are no safe levels of alcohol use during pregnancy, research suggests that higher alcohol use is linked to more risk to the developing fetus.

Effective screening and prevention and intervention strategies for substance use in pregnancy should be implemented. Prevention efforts should recognize that women’s alcohol use is intertwined with other life challenges. Intervention efforts in areas like poverty reduction and mental health services will support FASD prevention.

Pattern of Child Abuse in Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

E. M. Jiménez, C. Ferguson, A. Hanlon-Dearman

This poster demonstrated that “Parental risk factors for child abuse include poor parental skill, lack of education, homelessness, substance abuse, single parenthood, large family, psychological disorder, and mental disability; additional child risk factors include hyperactive behaviour, and being a foster child. Children with an FASD diagnosis may be at an increased risk due to the coexistence of many of these factors.” (Jiménez, 2009)

The small Manitoba study showed that 17% of children with FASD in the five-year study also had referrals to child protection and 60% of the children identified were in care.

Assessment of the Communication Domain in FASD

S. Proven

The purpose of this poster was to describe patterns of neurodevelopmental functioning in the communication domain in children with FASD under 12 years of age using a retrospective chart review of over 150 children.

Assessment results on four different SLP diagnostic tests were statistically analyzed and trends within each test were examined.

This review revealed globally poor performance with striking similarity on all four of the language tests used. These results described language development that was significantly affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol.
Resiliency Profiles in High Risk Adolescents in the Youth Justice System in MB
Hanlon Dearman, A, Longstaffe, S, Youth Justice Program Team

This poster showed how resiliency reflects “the ability of the individual to recover in the face of adversity, stress, or disability”—it is a multidimensional concept that includes both protective factors (such as positive outlook and self-esteem, strong social problem solving skills and moderate to high intelligence) as well as factors that increase risk for the individual.” (Hanlon-Dearman, 2009)

The purpose of this study was to pilot the use of a resilience tool that could be used clinically to measure strengths and challenges in individuals with FASD in order to provide appropriate supports. Among other findings, this study showed that individuals with FASD are significantly vulnerable (ie. low resilience,) including below average mastery, adaptability, and social relatedness. This suggests below average ability to incorporate feedback about their behaviour without a strong support system.

Support systems must be geared to both reduce risk (ie. support appropriate judgement making, reduce impulsivity) and increase protective factors (develop mastery and self-efficacy through early intervention programs). Further work to expand on these findings is ongoing.

Other Presentations
- Possibilities for Approaching Discipline with Youth with FASD: Stephen Degroot and Susan Opie
- FASD Art Therapy Project: Tanis Dick and Dorothy Schwab
- The Safety Net—Services for Transitional Youth & Adults Ineligible for Other Supports: Brenda Bennett and Gwen Kydd
- Using the NEPSY Test for Diagnosis of FASD: Sally Longstaffe and Ana Hanlon-Dearman
As described in the cover story, “Province Funds New FASD Specialists,” found in the Winter 2009 CAP News, an FASD Specialist was hired in each of the province’s four Child and Family Services Authorities.

Along with the Child Protection Branch of Family Services and Housing, Office of the Standing Committee and Healthy Child Manitoba, these specialists have formed a committee called the FASD Strategy Implementation Team (SIT).

The committee was charged with developing and implementing new services guided by the recommendations pertaining to FASD made in the Children’s Advocate report, “Honouring Their Spirits: The Child Death Review,” September 2006, and commitments made by the Province of Manitoba related to the Provincial FASD Strategy, ensuring provincial equity of service. Prior to the SIT forming, Changes for Children, in partnership with Family Services and Housing, committed funding to the Spectrum Connections FASD Program.

In 2008/09, the SIT was able to support a number of new FASD initiatives, some of which included:

- **Expansion of the Stop FASD mentoring program** to three rural/northern communities.
- **Distribution of information** and resource packages to CFS employees and caregivers and the creation of FASD resource libraries within each of the four CFS authorities.
- **An elders gathering** to share information related to FASD awareness, prevention and intervention, respecting the current knowledge and exchange of related ideas.
- **Visions and Voices**: a workshop designed to assist adults with FASD to develop presentations and public speaking skills enabling them to share their experiences of living with the disability. This project will be organized by the Mennonite Central Committee’s FASD Program.
- **Contribution support to the FASD Youth Accommodation Counsel** project which offers knowledgeable Legal Aid counsel about FASD.
- **One time grants to 11 community-based FASD coalitions** to address local/regional needs.
- **Support to assist in the development of a second “Reclaiming Our Voices” event**: a healing gathering to support First Nations women who have been affected by addictions and may have children with FASD.

The SIT has eagerly begun planning for the 2009/10 fiscal year and hopes to contribute even further to the growth of FASD services and supports for women, children and families involved with child welfare and for all Manitobans.
On the stormiest day of the year, March 25, 2009, over 150 hardy Winnipeggers made it out for a symposium titled, “Improving Policy and Practice to Support Women and their Children”, hosted by the Healthy Child Manitoba Office. In attendance were a diverse number of health and social service providers.

The keynote speaker was Nancy Poole from the British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health. She explored women-centred and trauma-focused approaches to FASD prevention.

Her presentation highlighted how services that address a wide array of issues that impact women who are substance using (homelessness, mental ill health, trauma, poverty, childcare and access to treatment) can work in complementary ways to help support and strengthen women and their children as they strive for greater well-being.

Throughout the day, several Manitoba organizations presented how they use trauma-focused and women-centred approaches in their daily practice. These programs included; Healthy Start for Mom and Me, Women’s Health Clinic, Inter-agency FASD Program, Manitoba Harm Reduction Network, Klinic, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, Laurel Centre and Sage House.

Throughout the event participants raised several important issues that still need to be addressed including: linking mother-centred and child-centred policy, policies that incorporate harm reduction approaches and holistic support for women and their children while the women are in correctional facilities and upon their release, and providing motivational interviewing techniques and harm reduction training to service providers.

The symposium helped build stronger partnerships, open up dialogue on our common goal of supporting women with addictions, and started a process of working through some of the barriers our systems present to women seeking support.

To read more about this conference and the presentations offered please visit www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/FASD09.htm.
Spring Forum Highlights Partnership
by Shirley Rafnkelsson, Family Services & Housing

Seven Oaks/Inkster Interagency FASD Committee proudly put on its first FASD Forum at CanadInns hotel in Winnipeg on April 30, 2009.

The committee wanted to bring community partners together for a special event that would:

1. Promote FASD in a positive manner.
2. Help our community participate as a group to encourage the sharing of information and approaches.
3. Strengthen capacity in our work around FASD.
4. Build partnerships.
5. Lay plans for the committee and its future work.

One hundred and ten attendees were fortunate to listen to two powerful speakers; Jessica Siddle and Russ Hilsher, whose moving stories of living with FASD were filled with hope and encouragement.

Brenda Bennett, who works with FASD Life’s Journey and Spectrum Connections shared her wealth of knowledge in the areas of FASD strength-based mentorship, key features and best practices with adolescents and adults.

There was also an opportunity for organizations and community members to discuss successful approaches on how our community members can support each other.

We would like to thank our partners who made this day a success:

- Child and Family Services
- Family Services and Housing
- Child Care Centers
- CADEC—Clinic for Alcohol and Drug Exposed Children
- Healthy Child Manitoba
- FASD Youth Justice
- Nor’West Co-op Community Health Centre Inc.
- Community service providers, community members and families
- Seven Oaks School Division
- FASD Life’s Journey/Spectrum Connections
- Fetal Alcohol Family Association of Manitoba
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority—Homecare

The committee has also created an FASD resource directory which includes a listing of programs and services for professionals, service providers and families, articles, website listings and information on FASD.
The Brandon Interagency FAS/FAE Committee Inc. was pleased to host a successful one day conference on May 22, 2009, in Brandon for over 200 participants, titled “The Good, the Bad & the Reality: From Tears to Triumphs—Living with FASD.”

Dorothy Schwab, Brenda Fjeldsted & Shelley Proven presented a very informative session entitled, “Strengthening Circles of Support: Before, During & After Diagnosis,” while Dr. Alexandre Tavares dispelled a number of myths and misconceptions about the role of psychiatric medicine in the care and treatment of those living with FASD in his presentation, “When Can Psychiatrists Help Children with FASD?”

The most anticipated presentation of the day was one given by Jessica and Corrie Siddle who shared their personal stories of living with FASD. Jessica’s moving slide show was met with an enthusiastic and genuinely grateful standing ovation.

We would like to thank the sponsors: Healthy Child Manitoba, Brandon Friendship Centre, Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba, Manitoba Metis Federation - Southwest Region, and Career Connections Inc. Without their generous contributions; we would not have been able to present this event to the Westman community.

The Brandon Interagency FAS/FAE Committee is currently planning an event to be held September 9th, 2009. We hope to see you there!

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CAP Representatives from Across Manitoba Meet to Strengthen Relationships
by Lia Braun, Metis Child & Family Services Authority

On June 8, 2009, the FASD Coalition chairs from across the province met to discuss current issues of common concern and to further develop regional relationships with the FASD community within Manitoba. The chairs shared their coalitions’ challenges and successes over the past year and provided updates on what is being planned for the upcoming months, including many local activities in recognition of International FASD Day on September 9th. They heard a presentation from Healthy Child Manitoba on alcohol use in pregnancy and from Dr. Ana Hanlon-Dearman about the exciting FASD research she has recently been involved in, including a preview of new projects on the horizon. The day concluded with a discussion of action items that each coalition could work on over the coming year to advance the FASD agenda in Manitoba. To date, FASD coalitions have identified themselves in the communities of The Pas, Brandon, Churchill, Flin Flon, Thompson, Norway House, Swan River, Interlake, North Eastman, South Central, and Seven Oaks/Inkster. If you are interested in finding out how you can join a coalition or start one in your community or region, contact Healthy Child Manitoba at 204.945.2266 or 1.888.848.0140 or one of the Child and Family Services Provincial FASD Specialists, Southern Authority: 204.783.9190, Northern Authority: 204.942.1842, General Authority: 204.984.9288, or Metis Authority: 204.949.0220.

Brandon Conference Brings Home the Many Facets of FASD
by Viola Fleury, Brandon Interagency FAS/FAE Committee

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Hats Off...

Dr Ana Hanlon-Dearmon, a developmental pediatrician at the Clinic for Alcohol and Drug Exposed Children, who was granted an FASD Research Scientist Award by Kerri Irvin-Ross, Government of Manitoba, Healthy Living Minister and Gord Macintosh, Family Services and Housing Minister, in partnership with the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine’s Department of Community Health Sciences.

Dr. Hanlon-Dearmon is a dedicated professional who has made many valuable contributions in the field of FASD research and practice.

Congratulations and Thank you!

Finding Hope in an FASD Assessment
by Jorden Laquette

Jorden Laquette was running out of options, until a stranger came to his jail cell.

Before I had my FASD assessment I used to get into a lot of trouble and get kicked out of school lots.

I had trouble staying focused on the positive stuff I could be doing. I've always thought, “Why be good and look stupid,” but when I was doing bad stuff it made me look even more stupid.

I was sitting in jail on June 16th, 2008, waiting for bail and a guy told me about the FASD assessment. He said I had a choice to participate and so I did.

I was transferred to Agassiz Youth Centre in Portage La Prairie and then to Manitoba Youth Centre where they gave me my assessment.

When I heard that I had FASD I knew it wasn’t my fault. It was my mom’s for doing drugs and drinking while I was a baby in her stomach.

Then when I appeared in court for my outstanding charges I was given a sentence conference. This meant that my support workers had to make a plan to keep me out of trouble and keep me busy every day while I was in the community.

Part of that plan was for me to go back to school. The school I had been attending didn’t want me to return, but when they were given my FASD assessment papers the school had no choice but to let me back in. The assessment showed that I had a problem staying focused on certain stuff which meant I was always brought into negative behaviour by my peers.

I found out that we are all different and we learn differently. I can learn easy using my hands but not my eyes or ears.

Since being released, I got my beginner’s drivers license and I’m still going to school and my other programs like I’m supposed to.

I hope you can learn from my story about life with FASD and I hope others will learn more about FASD and how it damages children’s brains.
The CAP information series was established in April 2006. The series consists of monthly presentations held in Winnipeg and offered to communities in rural and northern Manitoba via Telehealth services.

The series is made possible through the efforts of a volunteer committee of CAP and dedicated community members across Manitoba.

This year the turnout has been terrific with over 200 people attending across Manitoba via Telehealth and similar numbers attending the Winnipeg presentations at Mount Carmel Clinic and Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre.

This year’s Manitoba presenters included:

- Andrea Auch, InterAgency FASD program—My body needs to jump: Understanding sensory issues in individuals with FASD;
- Brenda Bennett and Gwen Kydd, Life’s Journey, Inc. —Helping adolescents with FASD understand issues of sexuality and sexual health;
- Elaine Karpick and David Colvin, AFM—From back alleys to boardroom:Is the face of drug use in Manitoba changing?;
- Dan Neault, Judge Mary Kate Harvie, and Dr. Sally Longstaffe, Manitoba Youth Justice Program—Outcomes vs Practical Realities.

Guest speakers from Vancouver and Toronto included:

- Nancy Poole, BC Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health speaking on Pregnancy and substance use: From research to practice and policy in February/09;
- Dr. Gideon Koren, Motherisk Program at the Hospital for Sick Children—Medication Safety in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding in March/09.

The CAP information series is open to anyone living in a Manitoba community with access to Telehealth technology.

For more information about Manitoba Telehealth visit their website at www.mbtelehealth.ca.

If you would like to know more about becoming a community contact for your area, or if you have ideas about speakers or topics you’d like to see presented email Mary Cox Millar, chair of the CAP information series at mmillar@hsc.mb.ca. Visit the CAP website for a list of upcoming sessions.

CAP Information Series Celebrates Third Anniversary
by Mary Cox Millar, CADEC

We’re on the web!

Check out the new CAP website
www.capmanitoba.ca

Find information on:

- upcoming local, provincial and national FASD events
- ordering books, videos, and other FASD resources
- FASD webcasts
- Current and back issues of CAP News
- FASD FAQs and MORE!

Visit us today and pass it on!

Thanks to the CAP website committee for their work in getting the site up and running.
Family Support Worker/FASD Certificate Program a Success
by Pat Bierny, Urban Circle Training Centre

In 2001, the Aboriginal Community and the Manitoba Government identified the need for trained workers of Aboriginal ancestry to support families in Child and Family Services organizations.

The Family Support Worker Program was initiated through a partnership with Urban Circle Training Centre and Red River College, Community Services.

In 2003, in response to the need for knowledge and skills around FASD, the Family Support Worker/FASD Certificate program was introduced.

The program is delivered by Urban Circle Training Centre Inc. in Winnipeg, a community-based, non-profit organization. The centre is governed by an independent board of directors and has been providing training for people of Aboriginal ancestry for nineteen years.

The Family Support Worker program has graduated between twenty and twenty-five students each year since 2001.

Staff use a strengths-based, family centred philosophy with a focus on respecting and empowering families as the foundation of our work.

Students are instructed in the impact of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, communication, parenting skills, advocacy and through presentations and projects, develop skills to share information.

The Life Skills and Academic areas combine to create an environment in which healthy risk-taking in the classroom is the norm. In the academic portion of the program, we have many open discussions, group projects and role playing exercises so that the students start to feel comfortable in their role when they go out into the community.

The program covers many subject areas to prepare students for their work and is intensive in both experiential and academic areas.

Some of the areas of instruction include: Interpersonal communication; family of origin; normal child development; understanding primary and secondary disabilities; working with women who are using substances; support strategies; guiding children’s behaviour; introduction to addictions; introductory counselling and trauma/maltreatment.

An integral part of the program is the practicum. This six-week component spent in the social service community meets learning objectives that cannot be accomplished in the classroom. We would not be able to succeed without our practicum partners, many of whom have been with the program since it started.

Students in the Family Support Worker/FASD program have been successful in finding employment and retention rates are high.


Intake for the next Family Support Worker Program is in October 2009, and the new program starts on January 25th, 2010. For more information call Haven Stumpf at 204.589.4433, ext.222.
With funding support from the Department of Justice Canada and the Province of Manitoba, the Accommodation Counsel for Youth Living with FASD is a three-year pilot project service (2009-2012) of Legal Aid Manitoba wherein a lawyer and a paralegal with extensive training about the disability are dedicated to providing services tailored to youth believed to be living with FASD.

Research indicates that individuals living with FASD are at greater risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system. Legal Aid Manitoba is committed to ensuring equal access to justice for all Manitobans. Ensuring equal access to justice for individuals living with FASD requires understanding and accommodating their unique needs as clients and as accused persons within the courts.

In addition to providing direct service and support to youth, the Accommodation Counsel lawyer and paralegal provide:

- consultation to community;
- support to Legal Aid Manitoba in accommodating the needs of clients living with FASD;
- the development of a resource guide of support and services available to youth living with FASD within Manitoba;
- the development of a promising practices resource for lawyers working with youth living with FASD;
- the development of a resource guide for caregivers of youth living with FASD who are involved or at risk of becoming involved within the youth criminal justice system;
- community education

**Anticipated Outcomes**

- improved client understanding of the court process and charges they face;
- diversion, judicial interim release (“bail”) plans, sentencing plans, and court orders and dispositions that take into account the client’s unique needs and abilities;
- improved understanding of the relevance of FASD by professionals working within the youth criminal justice system;
- improved intersectoral collaboration amongst service providers to better support youth living with FASD who are involved in the youth justice system

Contact: P: 204.985.9744, C: 204.797.6111, TF: 1.800.766.2148, E: colab@legalaid.mb.ca
Resources

Available Online

1. **www.fascets.org**
   Understanding FASD, bibliography, services, resources, personal stories, training schedule, marketplace and more.

2. **www.fasdconnections.ca**
   Current Canadian content. Special events, articles and more. Cool links to “new research.”

3. **www.fasbookshelf.com**
   Internet and mail order service for resources on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

4. **www.fasalaska.com**
   Information on FASD with a focus on intervention techniques for educators, family support; links to other sites; successful intervention; social/behavioural challenges; schedules; biological basis; frequently asked questions; developmental characteristics and more.

5. **www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/fasd/contacts.html**
   Healthy Child Manitoba has published a new FASD Services in Manitoba resource list which is now available free from the Healthy Child Manitoba Office, 204.945.2266 or toll free at 1.888.848.0140 or online at the address above.

6. **www.wsd1.org/childguidance/publications.htm**
   *Talking with Parents about Raising Children with FASD* by A. Bourbonniere and E Froelich, c2005, is a great little book full of ideas and strategies to help direct thinking, develop new insight, and guide sound practice when we are faced with the kind of challenges presented by children with FASD. It can be purchased for $12.95 plus GST from the Child Guidance Clinic of the Winnipeg School Division at 204.786.7841. Order forms available online.

FASD Information Manitoba

Toll-free line offering information on FASD and support to parents, caregivers, and professionals.
1.866.877.0050
Upcoming Events

**NATHAN ORY CONFERENCE**

**October 22, 23, 2009**

*Hapnot Collegiate, 115 Green Street, Flin Flon, Manitoba*

Nathan Ory is a registered psychologist with 30 years of clinical experience working with individuals who have developmental disabilities.

He has practical and specialized experience working with individuals who have Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, extremely challenging behaviour and/or a diagnosis with a current mental illness.

**Topics**

- Why people with intellectual disorders have challenging behaviour;
- How to teach people who have intellectual disabilities;
- Specific strategies to use when behaviour management does not work;
- How home and school can work together.

**In addition...**

October 20, The Pas and Cranberry Portage. Personal consultations with agencies, parents, and support teams.

For more information email carolhydamaka@mts.net

*Event hosts: Flin Flon/Creighton FASD Committee. Financial support provided by Norman Regional Parent Child Coalition.*

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**CAP Monthly Information Series**

**September to November 2009**

and

**January to May 2010**

dates and topics TBA

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**4th National Biennial Conference on Adolescents and Adults with FASD**

**April 14 – 17, 2010**

*Hyatt Regency in Vancouver, BC.*

Advance notice and call for presentations for this conference now available at www.interprofessional.ubc.ca

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**10th Annual Fetal Alcohol Canadian Expertise (FACE) Research Roundtable**

**Wednesday, September 9, 2009**

*Old Mill Inn, Toronto, Ontario*

Full program information, registration form and call for poster abstracts are posted on the Fetal Alcohol Research website www.motherisk.org/FAR/econtent_conferences.jsp#3

Posters abstracts submission deadline extended to July 31, 2009.
CAP Seeks Administrative Coordinator

In July 2009, CAP will be posting a job bulletin seeking an Administrative Coordinator to support the Coalition’s ongoing commitment to supporting service providers, families and government representatives with a shared interest in FASD.

The position will appeal to individuals interested in working on contract on a part-time basis. The position will allow the successful candidate to work predominately from home, but will require a time commitment of two to four half day meetings per month.

Some of the duties will include:
• updating the CAP website content;
• connecting with community contacts in order to disseminate information about upcoming events;
• working to expand Coalition membership;
• assisting with planning and coordinating the annual CAP event, and
• supporting CAP’s various subcommittees.

The position will be of interest to individuals living in Winnipeg or surrounding areas. The job posting will be available in a variety of formats and interviews will be held shortly after the competition closes.

CAP would like to encourage all who are interested to submit an application. Keep checking our website at www.capmanitoba.ca for the posting and contact information.

We look forward to hearing from you!

COALITION ON ALCOHOL AND PREGNANCY (CAP)

CAP provides a forum for service providers, families and agency representatives throughout Manitoba with an interest in FASD to share ideas, information, resources, struggles and successes.

CAP facilitates this through regular meetings, special events, and this published newsletter.

CAP receives funding support from Healthy Child Manitoba.

CAP meets every third Monday of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Healthy Child Manitoba Office. Teleconference available.

For more information or to get involved visit our website at www.capmanitoba.ca.

CADEC is moving from the Children’s Hospital Rehabilitation Centre for Children. More information to come in early September.

Please share this newsletter with your network.
To receive an electronic copy or if you require a print copy of CAP News contact Catherine Pate, CAP News editor at capnews@mts.net or phone 204.250.9120.