

SOGC Annual Clinical Meeting, Vancouver, June 22-27, 2006

What is the Human Cost of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome?

When: Sunday, June 25th, 2006 at 11:30 PDT

Drinking Alcohol During Pregnancy – At What Cost?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder causes life-long health problems. Though entirely preventable, the disorder remains the leading cause of developmental and cognitive disabilities among Canadian children, producing life-long negative impacts. It is estimated that between 1 and 6 out of every 1,000 children are born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) as a result of exposure to alcohol before birth.

Dr. Gideon Koren presents the results of an unprecedented new study which has found the cost of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome **exceeds \$4 billion each year in Canada**. Dr. Koren will demonstrate a recently discovered diagnostic method that will allow for the identification of thousands of previously undiagnosed cases of FASD and talk about what can be done to try and prevent it.

Dr. Gideon Koren is the founder and director of the Motherisk Program and a professor of Pediatrics, pharmacology, pharmacy and medicine. He is a staff pediatrician at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and the author/co-author of hundreds of scientific articles, book chapters and abstracts. Dr. Koren is also the founder of the FACE (Fetal Alcohol Canadian Expertise) Network and the Journal of FAS International.

This session is open to the media. To set up an interview with Dr. Koren please contact Patricia Robitaille at (604) 873-0080.

To register to attend the session, please go to the Media Desk on site at the Westin Bayshore, June 21-27, 2006.

Biographical Notes for DR. GIDEON KOREN

Dr. Koren is the founder and director of the Motherisk Program and a professor of Pediatrics, pharmacology, pharmacy and medicine. He is a staff pediatrician at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and the author/co-author of hundreds of scientific articles, book chapters and abstracts. He is a member of numerous professional societies.

In 1999 he received the Irving Sunshine Award (awarded by the International Association of Therapeutic Drug Monitoring & Clinical Toxicology), and in 1997 he received the prestigious Rawls-Palmer Award. Both awards were for outstanding contributions to clinical toxicology.

In March 2000 Dr. Koren received the Medical Research Council of Canada's Senior Scientist award for his work in Population Health Sciences, and in September 2003 he was awarded the Pippenger Award for outstanding achievement by the International Association for Therapeutic Drug Monitoring and Clinical Toxicology.

Dr. Koren is founder of the FACE (Fetal Alcohol Canadian Expertise) Network and the peer reviewed Journal of FAS International. In 2004 Dr. Koren was appointed as the Ivey Chair in Molecular Toxicology at the University of Western Ontario. He is creating a Canadian Network of Human Toxicology.

Dr. Koren's study on the costs of FASD is available on the Motherisk website at: http://www.motherisk.org/JFAS_documents/JFAS4022_e3.pdf

Backgrounder

What is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)?

What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)?

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is a type of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is an umbrella term that refers to a group of disabilities that can affect people whose mothers' drank alcohol during pregnancy. These disorders include:

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS),
- partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS),
- Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND), and
- Alcohol-Related Birth Defects (ARBD).

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects, brain damage and development problems to an unborn child. Children born with Fetal Alcohol

Syndrome display slower growth, have physical differences in their faces, and display some degree of brain damage.

It is estimated that anywhere between 1 and 6 out of every 1,000 children are born with FASD as a result of exposure to alcohol before birth.

FASD can lead to life-long developmental and cognitive disabilities and can affect learning and behaviour throughout childhood and adulthood. Examples of the effects include memory problems, low attention span, developmental delays, and moody or aggressive behaviour.

The effects of drinking alcohol during pregnancy can vary greatly, and there are no safe levels of alcohol to consume during pregnancy.

There is no cure for FASD.

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About The SOGC:

The SOGC is one of Canada's oldest national specialty organizations. Established in 1944, the Society's mission is to promote excellence in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology and to advance the health of women through leadership, advocacy, collaboration, outreach and education. The SOGC represents obstetricians/gynaecologists, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals in the field of sexual reproductive health.