



A prevalence study: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder among young people sentenced to detention in Western Australia

Carol Bower, Natalie Kippin
FASD Conference, Perth 2018

TELETHON
KIDS
INSTITUTE
Discover. Prevent. Cure.

Proudly supported by the
people of Western Australia
through Channel 7's Telethon

Studies of FASD among young people in justice systems

Author, year	Setting	Method	FASD prevalence
Fast et al 1999	Psychiatric service referrals Youth on remand	Physical exam, psychological assessment	67/287 = 23.3%
Murphy et al 2005	Youth in detention	Survey self-report	16/137 = 11.7%
Rojas et al 2007	Outpatient sex offenders	File review	25/230 = 10.9%
Smith et al, 2013	Youth in detention	Survey self-report	24/114 = 21%

No studies identified of systematic assessment of FASD domains of impairment

No data on FASD among young people in detention in Australia



The Banksia Hill Project

A feasibility study of screening, diagnosis and workforce development to improve the management of youth with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in the justice system

Funded by: National Health and Medical Research Council

Ethics approvals: WA Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee,
University of WA Human Research Ethics Committee

Chief Investigators: C Bower, R Watkins, R Marriott, R Mutch

Associate Investigators: S Zubrick, P Collins, C Pestell, J
Fitzpatrick, J Carapetis

AIMS: Banksia Hill Project

- **Establish an Australian estimate of FASD among youth in detention**
- Develop, implement and evaluate a workforce development intervention
- Explore participant experiences through a qualitative case study





Disclaimer

This research was conducted with the assistance of the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services (now Department of Justice) and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (now Department of Communities). Materials published or presented as part of this project are neither endorsed by the Department of Justice, nor are an expression of the policies or view of the Department of Justice. Any errors of omission or commission are the responsibility of the research team.





Acknowledgements

Young people at Banksia Hill, their families and carers

Banksia Hill Detention Centre staff

Department of Justice

Department for Child Protection and Family Support/Communities

Community and other service providers



Banksia Hill Project Team



PROJECT TEAM Telethon Kids Institute

- Noni Walker
- Raewyn Mutch
- Sharynne Hamilton
- Jacinta Freeman
- Hayley Passmore
- Natalie Kippin
- Bernadette Safe
- Carmen Condon
- Candy Cheung *
- Nicole Bothma*
- Helen Shield*
- Jasmine Taylor*
- Alex Springall*

**Supervised by C. Pestell UWA*

CONSUMER REFERENCE GROUP

- Neil Reynolds
- Aaron Dick
- Beverley Colbridge
- Robyn Williams

CHIEF INVESTIGATORS

ASSOCIATE INVESTIGATORS

REFERENCE GROUP – DCS & DCPFS

STEERING GROUP

Representatives from:

- First Peoples Disability Network Australia
- National Organisation for FASD Australia (NOFASD)
- Aboriginal Legal Service WA
- Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services
- Banksia Hill Detention Centre
- Consumer Representatives
- Chief investigators & project team

Banksia Hill Detention Centre

- The only youth detention facility in WA
- Youth 10-17 years of age
- On remand or sentenced
- Males (94%) and females
- 73% Aboriginal
- Average daily occupancy (2015-2016) = 133



We undertook...

Comprehensive assessment

Multidisciplinary team

- Research Officer
 - Paediatrician
 - Neuropsychology team
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Speech-Language Pathologist
-
- Prenatal alcohol exposure – AUDIT-C when possible
 - Health assessment
 - 9 domains of neurodevelopment (not Affect Regulation)
 - Australian Guide to Diagnosis of FASD



Participation



166 young people



```
graph TD; A[166 young people] --> B[113]; B --> C[99];
```

A flowchart illustrating the participation process. It starts with a box containing '166 young people'. A large grey arrow points down and then right to a second box containing '113'. Another large grey arrow points down and then right to a third box containing '99'. To the right of each box is a bullet point describing the corresponding step: 'Eligible and approached (2015-2016)', 'Assented & consented', and 'Completed assessments'.

- Eligible and approached (2015-2016)

113

- Assented & consented

99

- Completed assessments

Participation

- 93% male; 74% Aboriginal
- Third aged 17 years (range 13-17)
- 51% lived in metro area

Similar to Detention Centre population overall at that time

166 young people

- Eligible and approached
 - (2015-2016)

113

- Assented & consented

99

- Completed assessments



Who consented the young people?

	%
Parent	63
Dept. for Child Protection & Family Support	13
Guardian	24





Prenatal alcohol exposure

Table 4 Prenatal alcohol exposure for all young people completing the full fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) assessment

Prenatal alcohol exposure	Total completing FASD assessment (N=99), n (%)	Diagnosed with FASD (N=36), n (%)	Not diagnosed with FASD (N=63), n (%)
Confirmed	47 (47)	36 (100)	11 (17)
Confirmed high risk	28 (28)	22 (61)	6 (10)
No exposure	39 (39)	0	39 (62)
Exposure unknown	13 (13)	0	13 (21)



Diagnosis of FASD

- 36 young people fulfilled diagnostic criteria
 - 36% (CI 27%-46%); All FASD < 3 facial features
 - Aboriginal – 47% (35-58)
 - Non-Aboriginal – 8% (1-25)
- Only 2 of the 36 previously diagnosed





Prevalence of impairment – severe range

Domain	All participants %
Academic Achievement	62
Executive Functioning	54
Attention/speed of processing	55
Language	45
Memory	38
Motor Skills	29
Cognition (IQ)	21
Adaptive/social communication/ social skills*	6
Brain structure/neurology	1

* Not assessed for all participants



Prevalence of impairment – severe range

Domain	All participants %	FASD %
Academic Achievement	62	86
Executive Functioning	54	78
Attention/speed of processing	55	72
Language	45	69
Memory	38	56
Motor Skills	29	50
Cognition (IQ)	21	36
Adaptive/ social communication/ social skills*	6	11
Brain structure/neurology	1	0

* Not assessed for all participants





Sentinel facial features

	All	FASD
Number of sentinel facial features		
0	73 (74)	21 (58)
1	14 (14)	9 (25)
2	12 (12)	6 (17)
3	0	0



Reports and Feedback

Reports

- Results, recommendations & strategies
- Shared with those identified by the responsible adult





Impact of assessment

Parent of young person

“[name] is continuing to go from strength to strength and we have managed to action some of the recommendations, but it would be helpful that everyone has access to the contents contained within the report.”





Impact of assessment

Parent of young person

“[name] is continuing to go from strength to strength and we have managed to action some of the recommendations, but it would be helpful that everyone has access to the contents contained within the report.”

Youth Justice Officer

“The assessment has also assisted us in identifying a day program that would support his needs. At the moment, he is doing 2x half days of art with a local job network, which is really low stress, but is allowing him to achieve something; and then 2x days a week at [education service] ... and [they are] giving him lots of one on one support.”



Summary

Representative sample

- Comprehensive assessment
- 36% with FASD
- 89% with at least one impairment – severe range
65% in ≥ 3 domains
- Most of these had not been previously identified

Limitations

- Incomplete information for some domains and prenatal alcohol exposure

Complexity

- time, size of Western Australia, language diversity, literacy levels, available services
- hope, harm, duty of care, ethics

One in three in WA youth detention have foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, study finds

By Charlotte Hamlyn

Posted 3 Mar 2017, 5:31am



PHOTO: Up to 40 per cent of children in WA youth detention centre Banksia Hill have FASD.



The future...



1. Comprehensive assessment of young peoples' needs as routine practice
2. Build capacity and support the workforce
3. Develop & evaluate evidence-based intervention programs

