

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs) Risk Communication Workshop

# Executive Summary

American Academy of Pediatrics Headquarters  
Elk Grove Village, Illinois  
July 30 and 31, 2012

On July 30 and 31, 2012, the American Academy of Pediatrics<sup>1</sup> (AAP) hosted a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Risk Communication Workshop, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to develop clear and consistent messaging among eight organizations represented at the meeting about the risks of alcohol intake during pregnancy. Participating organizations included: the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology; the American Academy of Family Physicians; the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses; the Society for Physician Assistants in Pediatrics; the National Association for Pediatric Nurse Practitioners; and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities.

## Workshop Objectives

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- increase knowledge about anticipatory guidance messages and resources/tools currently used by members of organizations represented at meeting;
- develop a document or tool that encourages a more aggressive and consistent approach to anticipatory guidance related to alcohol use during pregnancy by constituents of the organizations represented at the meeting;
- increase consistency among provider groups in anticipatory guidance provided to patients and parents/families about alcohol use during pregnancy.

## Workshop Content and Results

Presentations on the following topics were provided at the workshop:

- Recent media coverage of alcohol and pregnancy focusing primarily on the role of the media with respect to influencing the social acceptance and lack of understanding of the risks of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. This was presented by NOFAS—the only international non-profit organization committed solely to FASD primary prevention, advocacy, and support.
- Results of two CDC-funded projects—the Danish *Lifestyle During Pregnancy* study and focus groups consisting of women of child-bearing age who were asked about their opinions on alcohol use during pregnancy.
- ACOG findings from a membership survey of opinions, beliefs and actions concerning alcohol use during pregnancy and awareness of available resources, and a focus group meeting held to determine the best method for training and information dissemination on alcohol use during pregnancy and for women of reproductive age.
- Initiatives and resources of the national organizations represented at the workshop focused on provider and/or public education.

Workshop participants discussed challenges associated with conveying the serious consequences of alcohol and pregnancy and misperceptions that clinicians and the public have about this topic. Later they convened in small groups to discuss development of the following: a 'unified message', a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions, and possible scripts for short web-based educational videos. Representatives identified concrete steps they were committed to taking within their organizations to increase consistent anticipatory guidance for alcohol and pregnancy and to help providers be more informed on this critical issue.

The agreed upon, collective message from the workshop was: *Alcohol and pregnancy: it's just not worth the risk.*

## Value of Workshop

This workshop provided participants with an opportunity to network with colleagues at a more intimate level about an issue that needs greater prominence. Preparing for the workshop compelled participants to research the availability of their own organization's resources and initiatives. Participants came away with a deeper understanding of the challenges providers have in educating patients exposed to sensational media coverage, inconsistent research findings, and increased alcohol advertising. Further, participants felt better prepared to address these challenges with the additional resources they learned about from partner organizations. Awareness of target audience beliefs and personal practices in terms of alcohol use during pregnancy was also enhanced.

## Future Steps

Each participating organization has pledged to continue this work. Many committed to raising awareness and ensuring the issue of FASDs receives greater organizational visibility and support. The AAP will continue to take the lead over the next several months to support the pledges prepared by partners and bring to fruition the ideas that were collectively developed during the workshop.

<sup>1</sup> The Risk Communication Workshop was hosted, planned and implemented by the AAP under the auspices of the Program to Enhance the Health and Development of Infants and Children (PEHDIC), a cooperative agreement with the CDC. The FASD Program is part of PEHDIC and has the goal of developing, disseminating and evaluating physician education and practice regarding FASDs.