

The Mystery of Risk:
Drugs, Alcohol, Pregnancy and the Vulnerable Child

Children prenatally exposed to maternal substances of abuse make up an ever-growing portion of the United States' population of children. The most recent data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse suggest that over 1 million children per year are exposed to alcohol and illicit substances during gestation. The health consequences for these children are enormous, but the implications for behavior, learning, and social/emotional growth are even greater. This program will:

- explore the biological and environmental factors that impact the ultimate development and behavior of alcohol- and drug-exposed children,
- establish the conceptual framework for the formulation of treatment strategies and approaches, and
- present the core components of a model of treatment that parents and professionals should consider when addressing the needs of the substance exposed child.

Learning objectives

At the completion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. List five complications of the newborn related to maternal drug and alcohol use.
2. Name the three diagnostic criteria of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.
3. Analyze the cognitive and behavioral development of children prenatally exposed to alcohol and other drugs, especially as related to social/emotional growth.
4. Describe the important components of treatment that should be addressed for substance-exposed children.
5. Discuss neurocognitive functioning as related to treatment strategies

Outline

- I. Epidemiology of Substance Use in Pregnancy
 - A. National surveys
 - B. State studies
 - C. Community evaluation

- II. Neonatal Outcome
 - A. Growth patterns
 - B. Morbidity and mortality
 - C. Neurobehavior and implications for maternal/child interactions

- IV. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
 - A. Growth
 - B. Facial dysmorphology
 - C. CNS effects
 1. IQ
 2. Behavior
 3. Information processing

- V. Impact on Social/Emotional Growth
 - A. Early trauma
 - B. Neurobiological functioning

VI. Prenatal Drug Exposure: The Growing Child

- A. Growth
- B. Health
- C. Neurocognitive functioning
 - 1. Global cognition
 - 2. Behavioral
 - 3. Educational

VII. Treatment and Intervention Strategies

- A. Theoretical model of treatment
- B. Evidence-based therapies
- C. Home and school interventions