



THE NATIONAL
FASD DATABASE



NEWSLETTER

Summer Newsletter / August 2025

Calls to Action!

We need number estimates for our Database Clinic Meeting on October 20th! Lunch will be provided; please let celisse.bibr@canfasd.ca know who from your clinic will be able to attend.

Clinic reports were updated this year! What were your thoughts on the new format? What do you tend to use your clinic reports for? We'd love to know!

Have any new and exciting updates from your clinic? We'd love to highlight them in these newsletters! Email me to let me know what's going on in your world.

Papers you may have missed:

[FASD Diagnostic Clinics in Canada](#)

[A Scoping Review of FASD and Pediatric Neurology](#)

[Exploring Occupational Therapy Practice for Children with FASD](#)

[SOGC Guidelines for Alcohol Use During Pregnancy Screening](#)

[Assessment of PAE in the US](#)

In this edition of the National FASD Database Newsletter, you can find:

- An Invitation to the National Database Clinic Meeting – join us for lunch on Oct 20th, in Toronto!
- A PAE Collection and Confirmation Resource – get tips and guidance for sensitively discussing PAE
- Updates in research and practice – new reports, issue papers and resources!
- Teams Roundup – what you may have missed!

FASD Month 2025 is coming up!

Everyone plays a part – are you ready to take action in your sector?

Take action and spread awareness by checking out our interactive webpage [here!](#)





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NEWSLETTER

Summer Newsletter | August 2025

Join us!

At the National FASD Database Diagnostic Clinic Meeting

*Meet everyone in-person
and get to know your
fellow clinics!*

**October 20th, 2025
12:00 – 4:00 PM ET**

*Get data and database-
related updates!*

Let's Talk:
*How can we use our
data to create change?*

Tom Thompson Room
(Conference Level of Hotel)

Hilton Downtown Toronto,
145 Richmond Street West,
Ontario, M5H 2L2

Tell us:
*What research would
you like to see or do?*

**Lunch will be provided
by LCFASD!**

We are looking to estimate numbers. Please email
celisse.bibr@canfasd.ca if you are able to attend!



A PAE Collection and Confirmation Resource



Rajani Clinic Training Services and CanFASD have
partnered to create a
**Prenatal Alcohol Exposure Collection
and Confirmation Resource!**



**Rajani FASD Assessment & Diagnostic
Clinic Training Services**

What should you know about this resource?

This resource is meant to be used by Diagnostic Clinics to improve collaboration between the team, diagnostic accuracy and overall client care. It aligns with Canada's FASD diagnostic guidelines (Cook et al, 2016) and alcohol use standards (CCSA, 2023). Alongside clarifying PAE thresholds and offering strategies for when full confirmation isn't possible, it also includes information on:

Tips

on how to approach
sensitive conversations

Guidance

on gathering and verifying
information across different
sources

Case Examples

on gathering and verifying
information across different
sources

Scripts

for conversations and
ethical decision-making
questions

Strategies

for trauma-informed care,
emphasizing cultural safety
and self-reflection

Self-Care Advice

on how to manage the emotional
impact of complex cases

How can you get this resource?

This guide is available on request—just contact clinictraining@lcfasd.com!



Updates in FASD Research and Practice



FASD in Canada: Current Knowledge and Policy

The Canadian Academy of Health Sciences has published their report examining the health and social challenges of FASD, exploring prevention, diagnosis, data collection, and supports across the lifespan.

CanFASD published [a response](#) to this report, commending the rigorous and comprehensive exploration of the issues.

The report presents 28 key findings, including:

- The significance and challenges of gathering epidemiological information about FASD
- The current best thinking on how to prevent PAE through education, alcohol policy, and access to health care and holistic wraparound supports
- Issues with the diagnostic process and capacity, including the importance of early assessment
- Key forms of interventions and supports needed and desired by people with FASD and their families in order to flourish across the lifespan

[Access the full report, summary report, and all other versions here.](#)

What does this mean for diagnostic clinics?

It can be difficult to see the long-term impact of your work from the day-to-day.

While the CAHS report itself is an exploration of the current circumstances around FASD (i.e., what we know now, and what needs to be done), it includes much discussion on diagnosis, diagnostic guidelines and increasing diagnostic capacity. There is more work to be done, but the progress that has been made would not be possible without your efforts.

Consensus within the report is that diagnostic clinics are doing excellent work: we just need more of it. More resources for you and more clinics across Canada would make a profound impact for individuals with FASD.



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Updates in FASD Research and Practice - Continued.

New Issue Paper: Sensory Processing and FASD



“The way my sensory world impacts me can be very amazing at times and sometimes the way it impacts can be very rough. For example, sometimes when I am fidgeting it is because I am anxious or scared but then sensory things like having fidgets and keeping my hands busy also help me cope and get through those rough times.”

- Adolescent with FASD

Dr. Katherine Flannigan and other researchers have published a new Issue Paper with CanFASD, exploring the ways individuals with FASD may process sensory inputs differently—whether it be a preference for stronger or weaker sensory experiences. The issue paper summarizes what is currently known about sensory issues, and what still needs more research.

Some key notes include:

- Early identification of sensory differences is key.
- It's important to ask individuals with FASD and their caregivers about their sensory processing concerns. Include questions about sensory processing in screening, clinical evaluations, and other assessments.
- Consider contextual and environmental factors and build on individual strengths and resources.
- Service providers can support individuals with FASD by adapting their environment and educating other professionals on how differences may impact behaviour across settings.

[Read the Issue Paper here!](#)



Updates in FASD Research and Practice - Continued.

FASD and the Criminal Legal System

Increased support is needed for individuals with FASD in the criminal legal system. Right now, the Research Leads at CanFASD are working with a team to test out a screening tool for use in the criminal legal system. Being able to accurately screen for individuals with FASD would allow them to receive the needed supports.

This research is well-underway. Interested in keeping up with its progress?

[Read an overview of its first part here.](#)

Updates from AB Diagnostic Clinic Meeting

The Lakeland Centre for FASD Rajani FASD Diagnostic Training and Support Services held its annual FASD diagnostic clinic meeting in May 2025.

Key issues raised by clinicians included the role of pre and postnatal trauma, categorizing ADHD alongside FASD, managing a re-assessment, rates of Autism and FASD overlap, the possible treatment of language and communication as separate diagnostic domains, and more. As we continue to build on what we know about diagnosing FASD, it is important to document these conversations to use them in future guideline development.

[Read more about the issues raised and what is next here.](#)



Know of any other great resources that should be shared? Email me at celisse.bibr@canfasd.ca to have them included in our next newsletter.



Teams Roundup – What You May Have Missed!

Webinar: Emerging FASD Research in Rodent Models

In April, Dr. Charlis Raineke and the students from his lab (Andrew Sheehan, Sunny Qureshi and Kingston Wong) presented their ongoing research in rodent models investigating the underlying biological mechanisms affected by PAE and to explore potential treatments that may mitigate some of these deficits.

Their research projects involved: (1) how PAE impacts social behavior and social reward processing during adolescence; (2) how PAE may accelerate age-related cognitive decline and (3) the effects of PAE on emotional regulation and introduce treatment strategies.



[The recording of the webinar is available here.](#)

Webinar: Severe Pediatric Vascular Leukoencephalopathy

In February, we were joined by medical student Julie Gallien and supervisor Dr. Ludvine Witkowski, who presented a case study about an individual with FASD who had severe pediatric vascular leukoencephalopathy.

There was interesting discussion around how FASD affects the white matter of the brain, the impact of PAE on vascularization, and if a diagnosis of FASD should impact when particular tests are done, such as an MRI.



[The recording of the webinar is available here.](#)

Webinar: Ongoing FASD and Microbiota Research

In December of 2024, Dr. Tamara Bodnar and the students from her lab presented their research in FASD and Gut microbiota. Nathan Thompson, Garrett Ainsworth-Cruikshank and Erika Tjostheim presented their studies:



- Exploring the link between the gut microbiota and mental health in adults with FASD;
- Health and behavioural outcomes in children with FASD: link to the gut microbiota
- The link between the immune system and cognitive function in children with FASD: risk vs. resilience

[The recording of the webinar is available here.](#)



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Teams Roundup – What You May Have Missed!

NEW! Data Dictionary and Database FAQ

We have two new documents to help clarify any questions you might have about the database and help with data entry training. Please review these documents and let me know if you have any feedback.



[Data Dictionary](#)



[Database FAQ](#)

Teams Discussion: Assessment Measures

We had an interesting discussion about what you use to measure adaptive functioning skills. The ABAS-3 and Vineland-3 were brought up, with the former being more user-friendly—but the latter being available online and also available in French. However, there are difficulties with using these measures in families with low literacy.

If you'd like to read more, two papers discussing assessment measures were also brought up.

[Assessment Measures of Brain Function
in Canadian FASD Diagnostic Clinics](#)

[Assessment Measures Used in FASD
Diagnostic Clinics in Alberta](#)

Remember!

The Canada FASD Conference is coming up fast!

Will you be joining us at the National FASD Database
Diagnostic Clinic Meeting on October 20th, 2025?

Meet us in the Tom Thompson Room on the Conference level of the Hilton Downtown Toronto Hotel, 145 Richmond Street West, Ontario. We'll be meeting from 12:00 – 4:00 PM ET—and lunch will be provided! Thank you, LCFASD!

If you are attending, please let celisse.bibr@canfasd.ca know. We can't wait to meet in person!

Thank you for reading!