

Submission

I have been interested in this subject for many years when working as a paediatrician and geneticist assessing children with learning disabilities

In considering preventive strategies may I make a few suggestions

1 FAS is the earliest form of child abuse being in utero .Our society needs to encouraged to think of it in those terms.We treat abuse seriously postnatally but not prenatally

2.Contraception both the pill and condoms should be easily available at no cost to the public and advice about the dangers of drinking damaging the unborn baby printed on the packaging stressing that stopping drinking all alcoholic liquids should be part of pregnancy planning.

3The hospital should by law have to ensure that any woman having had a baby with withdrawal signs secondary to drugs in the newborn period should be interviewed before leaving the obstetric ward and offered tubal ligation before discharge or arrangements made for depot provera injections.

4 FAS is so endemic in our aboriginal population and underlies problems in schools and the disintegration of their communities. Firm measures are needed .This might be the offer of long term subcutaneous implants between the time school girls are becoming sexually active to reaching some degree of maturity and can plan to embark on a pregnancy

Historically many of the first convicts had FAS -their heights were on average 5ft2 inches and they were described as ugly (small Eyes)so things are improving.

look forward to your final report

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