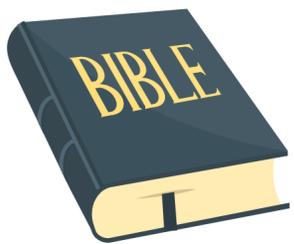


How understanding of FASD has progressed



Researcher Dr Alan Price talked about how people's understanding of FASD has changed over the years.



The Bible warns about avoiding alcohol in pregnancy. But it's not clear if it was because they knew back then then the damage it could do. Some say Aristotle had a quote about it, but that's fake.



In the late 1600s and 1700s a gin epidemic hit London. Alcoholism in pregnancy was linked generally with poor health and birth defects. The language they used at the time was very harsh.

Understanding changed in the 1900s

1899

*The Influence of Maternal Inebriety
By W. C. SULLIVAN, M.D., and
Mental Disease, R.U.I., Deputy Medical
at Prison, Parkhurst.*

In 1899 for the first time a research paper suggested the direct impact of alcohol on the fetus.



In the 1920s a lot of people were anti-alcohol. In the US, alcohol was outlawed (this was called Prohibition). When Prohibition ended, people ignored all the warnings about the dangers of alcohol. It took another 50 years for people to take alcohol in pregnancy seriously.

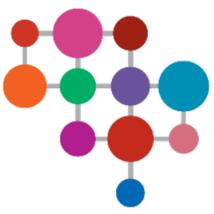
1920s



It wasn't until the 1970s when scientists started to focus seriously on the impact alcohol in pregnancy could have on the baby, especially on the baby's brain.

60's

70's



NATIONAL
ORGANISATION
FOR
FASD



1970s

In 1970 in the US, Dr Christie Ulleland noticed babies born to alcoholic mothers weren't growing properly and that they had smaller heads, small eye openings, and problems with their jaws.

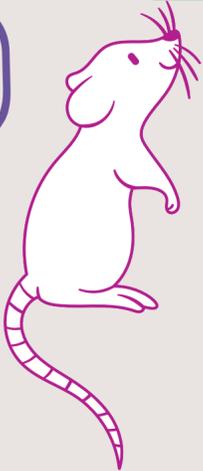
Her research kickstarted what we've come to understand about the impact of alcohol in pregnancy (even though a French scientist published something in 1968 in French, his work didn't get as much attention).

In 1975, Jones and Smith came up with the term "Fetal Alcohol Syndrome".

Researchers were still only focusing on heavy drinking and physical features.



**But it's still not the full
picture about FASD**



Toward modern research

Different research groups started to look at different things, in different ways. Some used animals to show how alcohol exposure might affect humans

They studied things like how prenatal alcohol exposure affects:

- cell tissue
- animals
- population
- human brain imaging

Results started to show that alcohol in the womb can impact the developing baby in many ways.

By the 1990s researchers start to talk about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. They recognised it's "neuro-developmental" - which means it's brain based and affects how the baby develops.

Government warnings start to appear.



FASD

Today

Researchers continue to explore how alcohol in pregnancy causes cell death and how that affects developing cells in the fetus ('apoptosis').

They are learning how alcohol exposure in pregnancy affects people's genes ('epigenetics'). These changes can be passed down to children and grandchildren.

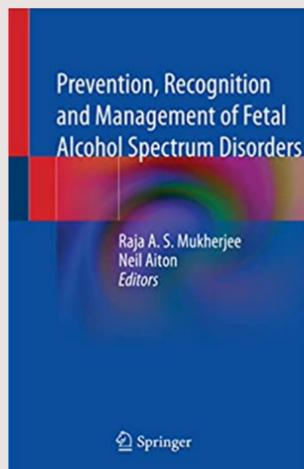
Research is looking at low-level exposure and risk factors like the environment, diet, etc. as well as how Dad's drinking impacts sperm quality and increases social pressure on their partner.



Today no one can say what level of risk there is in each pregnancy, so the safest choice is to avoid alcohol when pregnant or trying to become pregnant.



What is Raja and Neil's FASD Book Club?



Prof Raja Mukherjee and Dr Neil Aiton wrote a book for other doctors about FASD. But they hope more people can access the information.



In this online book club people who wrote chapters give 15-minute talks about what they wrote and then they answer questions.



After each book club, the talks are shared on National FASD's YouTube channel.



You don't have to read the book. It's expensive because it's for libraries and universities. But if you want to order it, it's here:

<https://tinyurl.com/RajaAndNeilFASDBook>