

Learning with FASD: Development of evidence-based resources on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder for secondary school teaching and support staff

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Background:

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) affects an estimated 3.65% of Australians, meaning there is likely a child with FASD in every Australian classroom. Early diagnosis and intervention can reduce the risk of difficulties associated with FASD such as a disrupted education, mental health challenges, harmful substance use, and contact with the justice system. However, FASD remains under-diagnosed in the clinical system and under-recognised in Australia's education system. *Learning with FASD* is a website that provides evidence-based resources that assist educators to understand and support students with FASD. This project aimed to address the gap in evidence-based FASD resources for the secondary education sector.

Methods:

Development was informed by a scoping review of existing FASD-related resources for the secondary education sector, and consultations with FASD and education experts, educators, and parents/caregivers of young people with FASD.

Results:

The scoping review identified 138 resources across peer-reviewed and grey literature databases, app stores, podcasts and contacting stakeholders. These findings, combined with consultations with experts (N = 9), educators (N = 50) and parents and caregivers (N = 28) were used to identify priority areas for resource development. Priority areas included: i) evidence-based information specific to secondary school settings, ii) resources that assist educators to understand the impact of FASD on learning and behaviour; and iii) resources that provide practical teaching strategies to support learning, behaviour and development. Seven new evidence-based resources were developed to address these priorities.

Conclusion:

Adolescence can be particularly challenging for young people with FASD. Equipping secondary educators with evidence-based information can help create more equitable, inclusive and supportive school environments for these students. Learning with FASD's resources provide practical approaches to support the wellbeing, engagement, and meaningful participation of adolescents with FASD in the school environment.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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