

## **Examining the documentation of alcohol use in maternal records of SUPPS clients who identify alcohol as the primary substance of concern**

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**Introduction and Aims:** Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is preventable and screening of alcohol use by pregnant women during antenatal care is vital in the early detection of prenatal alcohol exposure. The aim of this study is to examine documentation of maternal alcohol use of clients who attended the Substance Use in Pregnancy and Parenting Service (SUPPS) and prenatal alcohol exposure of their newborns.

**Design and Methods:** A retrospective medical record audit was conducted on clients who attended SUPPS from 2010 to 2021 and identified alcohol as their primary substance of concern.

**Results:** Fifty-three pregnancies were included in the analysis. Of these, 43.4% were screened as medium to high risk of alcohol consumption at their first visit with a midwife, 3.8% as low risk and 43.4% as no risk. The rest were either not screened or there was no documented data to determine the risk. Documented repeated screening at follow-up antenatal visits at 28 weeks and 36 weeks were low, with only 28.3% and 26.4%, respectively. Prenatal alcohol exposure was not highlighted in the maternal psychosocial care plan for 64.2% of the pregnancies. Prenatal alcohol exposure in the neonatal discharge summary was only documented on 20.8% of the neonates.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** Universal screening for alcohol use in pregnancy is suboptimal. The real negative impact of maternal alcohol use is likely underestimated. Most neonates did not have prenatal alcohol exposure documented in a discharge summary. Over one third of the mothers had alcohol exposure documented in the psychosocial postnatal plan.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** Documentation of prenatal alcohol exposure in either the postnatal psychosocial care plan or maternal and neonatal discharge summary, would assist in the identification of alcohol exposed infants. This could facilitate early identification of developmental concerns and ensure timely referral to assessment and support services.

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