



BACKGROUND

The Canadian Foundation on Fetal Alcohol Research (CFFAR) is an independent, non-profit foundation created to promote interest and fund research related to the short and long-term bio-medical, psychological and social effects of alcohol consumption during pregnancy, and the prevention of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).

CFFAR awards research grants to eligible Canadian researchers annually in conjunction with International FASD day and the annual Fetal Alcohol Canadian Expertise (FACE) Research Roundtable.

In keeping with scientific and academic tradition, all grant applications are peer-reviewed under the direction in accordance with guidelines determined by the CIHR. Guidelines for Grant applications can be obtained on the CFFAR website at www.fasdfoundation.ca.

The review of applications is led by CFFAR's Research Director, Dr. Gideon Koren, a world renowned authority in FASD research.

CFFAR was created in September 2007 through a five year \$1 million commitment by the Brewers Association of Canada.

CFFAR is governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of leading researchers, experts and interested parties in the field of FASD research.

CFFAR's Board of Directors:

- Dr. Louise Nadeau, Ph.D., Chair
- Dr. Gideon Koren, MD, FRCPC, Director of Research
- Howard Collins
- Ian Faris
- Jacques LeCavalier
- Maureen Maguire

About the 2008 grant recipients and their projects

The 2008 recipients are the first group of researchers to receive CFFAR grants. They represent an elite team of Canadian researchers. They will be receiving funds over the next two years. They are:

Dr. Joanne Weinberg & Dr. L. Galea, University of British Columbia.

Their research titled "Vulnerability to addiction: Effect of prenatal alcohol exposure and stress" will examine, in an animal model, how prenatal alcohol exposure and stress interact to increase

vulnerability to addiction. Individuals affected by FASD often suffer from addiction to alcohol and other substances. It is not clear whether this is due to the effects of alcohol on fetal brain development or whether it is secondary to family genetics or environmental - cultural influences on the youngster. This research project will elucidate the mechanisms of the linkage between in utero exposure to alcohol and addiction.

Dr. Joanne Rovet, University of Toronto, Hospital for Sick Children.

Her research project is titled "Mapping memory function in FASD". Children with FASD have extensive damage in memory function. This research will link tasks of memory with changes in the hippocampal region of the brain, and function of the brain as measured by the revolutionary functional MRI.

Dr. Joey Gareri, PhD Candidate, Janine Hutson, MD & PhD candidate, University of Toronto.

Their work is titled "The Association between fatty acid ethyl esters in meconium and the diagnosis of FAEE in an at-risk Canadian population". Meconium FAEE has emerged as an important tool to identify babies exposed in utero to excessive maternal alcohol use. This study will follow up the health and neurodevelopment of children who were tested positive for FAEE and compare them to babies who were tested negative. This analysis of an at-risk group of Canadian children will elucidate the predictive value of positive meconium FAEE in identifying later adverse neurodevelopmental outcome.

About FASD

- FASD and its symptoms were first diagnosed close to 35 years ago.
- FASD is caused by a woman's consumption of alcohol during pregnancy.
- It is estimated that:
- FASD affects over 300,000 Canadians¹;
- 9 in 1000 children in Canada are born with FASD each year².
- First Nations Communities are particularly impacted by FASD. Studies have shown that in some Aboriginal communities 1 in 5 children are born with FASD³.

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada. Frequently Asked Questions. 2005
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fasd-etcaf/pdf/faq_fasd_e.pdf.

² Health Canada. It's Your Health – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. 7 Dec 2006
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/fasd-etcaf_e.html.

- FASD is the leading cause of developmental and cognitive disabilities in Canadian children⁴.
- Secondary disabilities such as depression, obsessive compulsive disorders and alcohol and drug dependency are often linked to FASD².
- Research demonstrates that people who suffer from FASD are at a much larger risk of experiencing negative socio-economic outcomes such as criminal records and incarceration, unemployment and homelessness².

About Fetal Alcohol Canadian Expertise (FACE)

- FACE (Fetal Alcohol Canadian Expertise) is a network of over 150 researchers, program providers and other stakeholders, actively engaged in FASD prevention and intervention.
- At FACE Research Roundtables held each year on or about September 9th, members and guests continue the time-honoured tradition of research collaboration – presenting scientific findings for peer review, describing successful service models, and identifying next steps in the fight against Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).
- Since 2000, Roundtable participants have been the first to:
 - study the direct medical and educational costs of FASD in Canada and social impact of FASD on an individual's life;
 - develop new screening methods such as meconium testing, and diagnostic tools such as saccadic eye movements;
 - highlight the role of fathers in the prevention of FASD; and
 - develop award-winning programs to help pregnant women who use alcohol overcome their addiction.

³ First Nations and Inuit Health. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effects. 8 Mar 2005 www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/famil/preg-gros/intro_e.html.

⁴ Public Health Agency of Canada. Summary Report: National Thematic Workshop on FASD. 2006. www.nationalframework-cadrenational.ca/uploads/files/TWWS_FASD/FASD_PHAC_EN_mar29_30_06.pdf