

GINA monthly e-news March 09

New FASD course



GINA has believed for a long time that there is a shortage of education available about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Finally, however, a new accredited distance learning course about FASD has been launched. Below Gloria Armistead, founder and full time volunteer of FASawareUK, discusses how the new course came into existence.

FASawareUK, a totally voluntary group, have been in existence for 10 years. We identified that it has become acceptable for women to drink excessive amounts of alcohol often resulting in binge drinking and statistics show this has reached an epidemic rate. Yet there was no message of informed choice. **“NIL alcohol in pregnancy is the only way to be sure of a positive outcome.”**

There are NO two women the same, NO safe limit, or safe amount. FASD is totally preventable with education and awareness. It is not hereditary or genetic. Yet totally incurable.

Being a parent and trying to get all sectors of society to take on board the message of informed choice has been a huge problem. I embarked on a long journey of research and learning. There were no courses

available within the UK so I had to take courses via distance learning from Canada and USA. The charity FASawareUK has worked hard to create FASD awareness. We now at FASawareUK receive many, many requests from students, professional bodies looking for training.

Early last year I on behalf of FASawareUK managed to secure a grant from the Grassroots funding via Manchester Community Fund. This enabled us to find a professional course writer. Once the course was written, we then embarked on another journey to get the course put together in a professional format and we found the National Consortium of Colleges (NCC). Thanks to their support, understanding and listening ear we have developed the first FASD course for the UK accredited with the Awarding Body OCNW.

The accredited distance learning programme consists of the following modules:

1. The History of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
2. Taking Responsibility for the Unborn Child
3. Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and Screening
4. Children with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)
5. Behavioural Phenotypes of FASD
6. Growing up with FAS

What we have identified is FASD is now becoming an issue in the UK yet there is a severe shortage of trained clinicians. The course will help anyone who comes into contact with a child/youth/adult to understand all about this often hidden disability.

**Gloria Armistead
FASawareUK**

For more information about the course please visit www.ncchomelearning.co.uk or www.fasaware.co.uk

In the news . . .

Fears over alcohol test for mothers

A product that tests for traces of alcohol in breast milk has triggered warnings that mothers who rely on it could damage the health of their baby and encourage binge drinking. Milkscreen contains test pads that change colour on contact with breast milk containing alcohol, warning women that it is unsafe to breastfeed. Experts, however, say that there is no clear answer to how much a new mother can drink before the alcohol gets into her milk, nor how long she should wait after drinking the alcohol to ensure it is not passed on to her baby. The British Medical Association advises breastfeeding women not to drink at all; the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists says one or two units a couple of times a week is "probably" safe. **Some studies suggest that about 2% of the alcohol a mother consumes will enter her bloodstream**, and therefore her milk, with levels continuing to rise in milk for between 30 and 90 minutes after the last alcoholic drink. Other research says that a newborn's immature liver makes it very difficult to process even small amounts of alcohol.

Source: Guardian online, 15/02/09

New booze 'death map' shame of Scots women

The deadly toll of Scotland's love affair with alcohol has been laid bare with a report showing **Scots women are now at greater risk of fatal drink-related disease than English men**. Compiled by experts at the University of Glasgow and the Medical Research Council, it also shows the death rate among Scottish men is more than double that of their counterparts south of the border, at 38 per 100,000. In the economically deprived area of Ibrox in Glasgow the death toll rises to 176 per 100,000 for men and 59 per 100,000 for women. In a separate report, Scots were ranked eighth in a league of shame of the world's biggest drinkers, ahead of England, Wales and even Russia.

Source: Scottish Daily Express, 23/02/09

Drink a day increases cancer risk

A glass of wine a day is enough to increase your risk of developing cancer, women are being warned. Consuming just **one drink a day causes an extra 7,000 cancer cases - mostly breast cancer - in UK women each year**, Cancer Research UK scientists say. The risk goes up the more you drink, whether spirits, wine or beer, the data on over a million women suggests. Overall, alcohol is to blame for about 13% of breast, liver, rectum, mouth and throat cancers. Researchers estimate that about 5,000 cases of breast cancer in the UK - 11% of the 45,000 cases diagnosed each year - can be attributed to women's consumption of alcohol. The study looked specifically at women who consumed low to moderate levels of alcohol - defined as three drinks a day or fewer. The study was published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

Source: BBC online, 24/02/09

Ladette culture hits schools

The ladette culture of young women binge drinking and fighting is now taking hold in Scotland's classrooms, new figures reveal. Official statistics from the government show that increasing numbers of girls have been excluded from school for alcohol abuse, knife crime and threatening behaviour over the past year. The figures reveal that cases of girls sent home from school for assault with a weapon increased by 50% in 2007-08. And alcohol misuse became more of a problem among girls than boys last year, with more than 200 instances where girls were excluded after being caught with drink at school. The increasingly common sight of women binge drinking in city centres and becoming involved in fights has fuelled fears of ladette culture across the UK. Last month, **a 33% jump in sales of vodka in the past five years** was put down to women drinking the spirit in large quantities, and a report last November showed that cases of women attacking their partners had doubled in seven years.

Source: Scotland On Sunday, 07/03/09

Rape Crisis Centre online survey on intimate partner sexual violence



It's been 20 years since rape in marriage became a crime in Scotland (it did not become a criminal offence until 1991 in England and Wales) but 20 years on, intimate partner sexual violence remains a very hidden and unspoken of aspect of domestic abuse. Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre is undertaking an online survey on intimate partner sexual violence, asking women to look at the questionnaire and complete it as far as they can, and to cascade it down to others within their organisations and networks in the hope that as many women as possible across the UK will participate. For more information visit www.rapecrisiscentre-glasgow.co.uk

New women and alcohol research

New Scottish based gender and alcohol research from the Gender and Health Team of the Social and Public Health Sciences Unit of the Medical Research Council has been issued. The interesting research looks at gender and drinking in different age cohorts in the west of Scotland, and also gender and alcohol deaths across Scotland. If you are interested in finding out more about this research please get in touch with GINA, or visit www.sphsu.mrc.ac.uk

International Women's Day 2009



International Women's Day 2009 was Sunday 8th March, and was a great opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women, past and present. International Women's Day events were held across the world, and GINA attended several events in order to promote responsible drinking. GINA ran an information stall at a Women's Day event on Friday 7th March in Cumbernauld, held by North Lanarkshire Council, with the theme of health and wellbeing. On Monday 9th March the Mental Health Network (Greater Glasgow) held an International Women's Day event at Celtic Park at which GINA also ran an information stall. The event coincided with the relaunch of the Network's Women's Forum. Service users, carers and workers were invited for a day of pampering, relaxation, taster sessions and health information. Both events were a great success and a brilliant way to meet women and promote responsible drinking.

Events

21 April 2009, Substance Abuse in Adults Conference, Glasgow Hilton

Substance Abuse in Adults - Understanding the problems and improving treatment is a one day conference organised by the University of Glasgow Division of Developmental Medicine. To book a place, or find out more information go to www.gla.ac.uk/departments/developmental/cpd/newcourses

28 April 2009, Drugs and Alcohol in Children and Young People Conference, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

This innovative conference organised by the University of Glasgow, Faculty of Medicine will identify, review and debate the current issues surrounding drugs and alcohol in children and young people today. For more information and to book a place go to www.gla.ac.uk/departments/developmental/cpd/newcourses

Training

25 March, Diversity & Equality Training - The Legislation & Human Rights, Glasgow

From Positive Action in Housing. The legislative background for equality and diversity has expanded and increased over the last few years, with new and amended legislation to all equality strands, including race and ethnicity, age, disability, gender, faith and belief, and sexual orientation, as well as Human Rights. The aim of this course is to ensure that attendees are aware of this opportunities legislation, and what this means in practice for organisations. For more information please visit www.paih.org/users/training/

Resources



Alcohol and depression factsheet

Alcohol Focus Scotland has been working with voluntary organisation Depression Alliance Scotland, to raise awareness of alcohol and depression. A factsheet on this topic has been produced which covers the links between alcohol, mood and

depression, signs that someone has an alcohol problem, signs of depression, mixing medication and alcohol, tips for feeling better and where to get support. The factsheet will be available to download shortly from www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk and www.dascot.org

Do you have any information you would like to share with the GINA network?

We would love to hear from you if you have examples of best practice, studies of interest, information on services or upcoming events etc. If so please get in touch.

The next GINA newsletter will be distributed in April 2009.

**GINA Project Officer
Alcohol Focus Scotland
166 Buchanan Street
Glasgow
G1 2LW**

T: 0141 572 6597
E: gina@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk
W: www.ginascotland.org.uk