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Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day

The message the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is sending this International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day, is that drinking even a small amount of alcohol during pregnancy is not worth the risk.

Research has shown that many women are unaware of the threat that even low level alcohol consumption poses to the development of an unborn child.

Drinking at any time during pregnancy can lead to a variety of problems - including growth restriction, intellectual disability and physical birth defects.

“Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is completely preventable,” says NCWNZ National President Elizabeth Bang, “but since the severity of the disorder does not necessarily correspond to the level of alcohol intake, the only way to be 100 per cent safe is to avoid alcohol altogether”.

NCWNZ supports the application for health advisory labels put forward to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) in 2006 by the Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC), but is disappointed that this application has been connected with a separate application relating to excessive drinking.

NCWNZ believes these applications should be treated as separate labelling issues, since FASD is not linked to excessive drinking. Combining these two applications has only served to slow the process down.

“There is a lack of consistency in the messages women are receiving around the potential impact that drinking while pregnant can have on the rest of your life,” according to Elizabeth Bang. “Labelling alcohol containers to caution against drinking during pregnancy will increase awareness and potentially have a life changing impact for the mothers and children of the future”.

Further Information:

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“Women Influencing Policy”