



When the safest is zero

NordAN 2022

Copenhagen, Denmark

18-19 November 2022

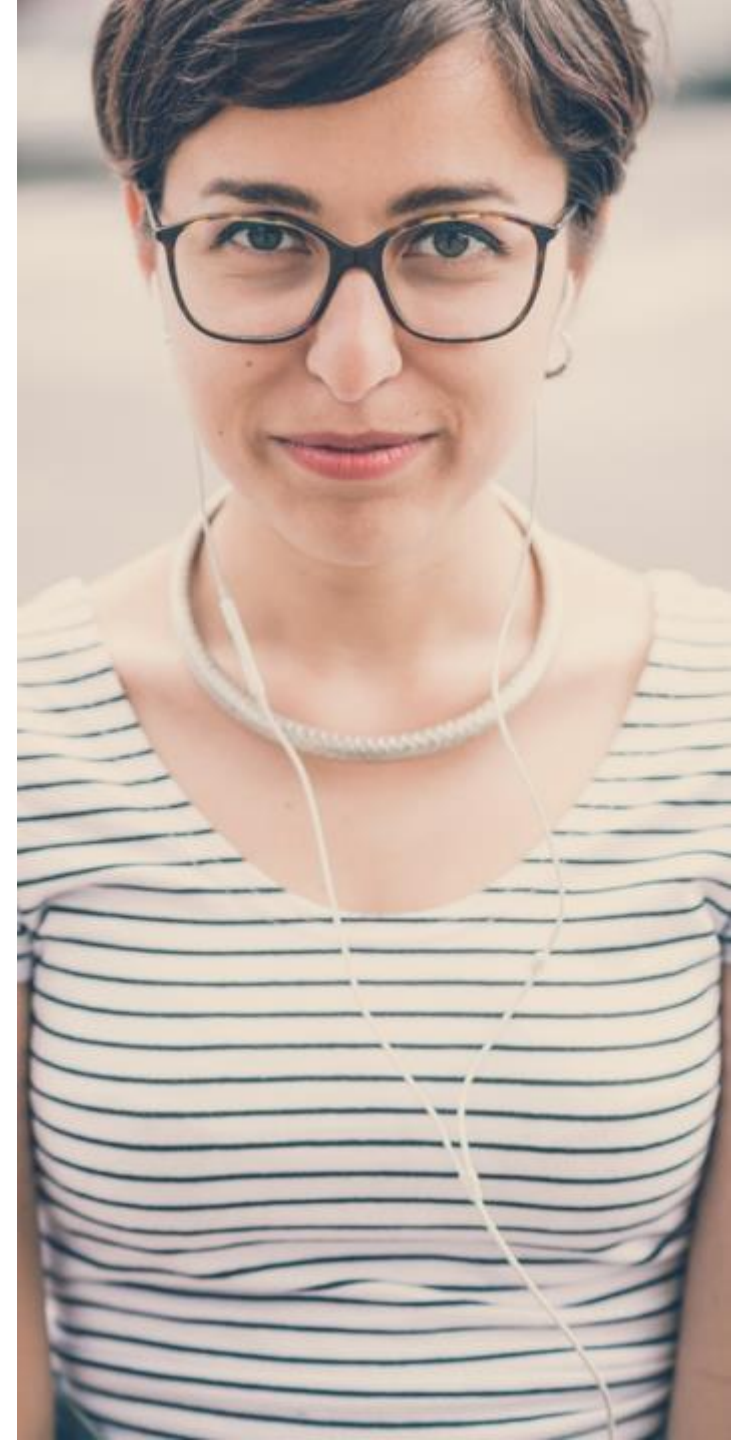
Introduction

- Nordic welfare Centre, Helsinki – an institution under the Nordic council of Ministers
- First project initiated in 2019, second project in 2021
- Collaboration with Niina-Maria Nissinen, doctoral student at Tampere University and Folkhälsan Research Center, Helsinki
- The reports are not to be considered research, but they are built on research and other knowledge.



Background

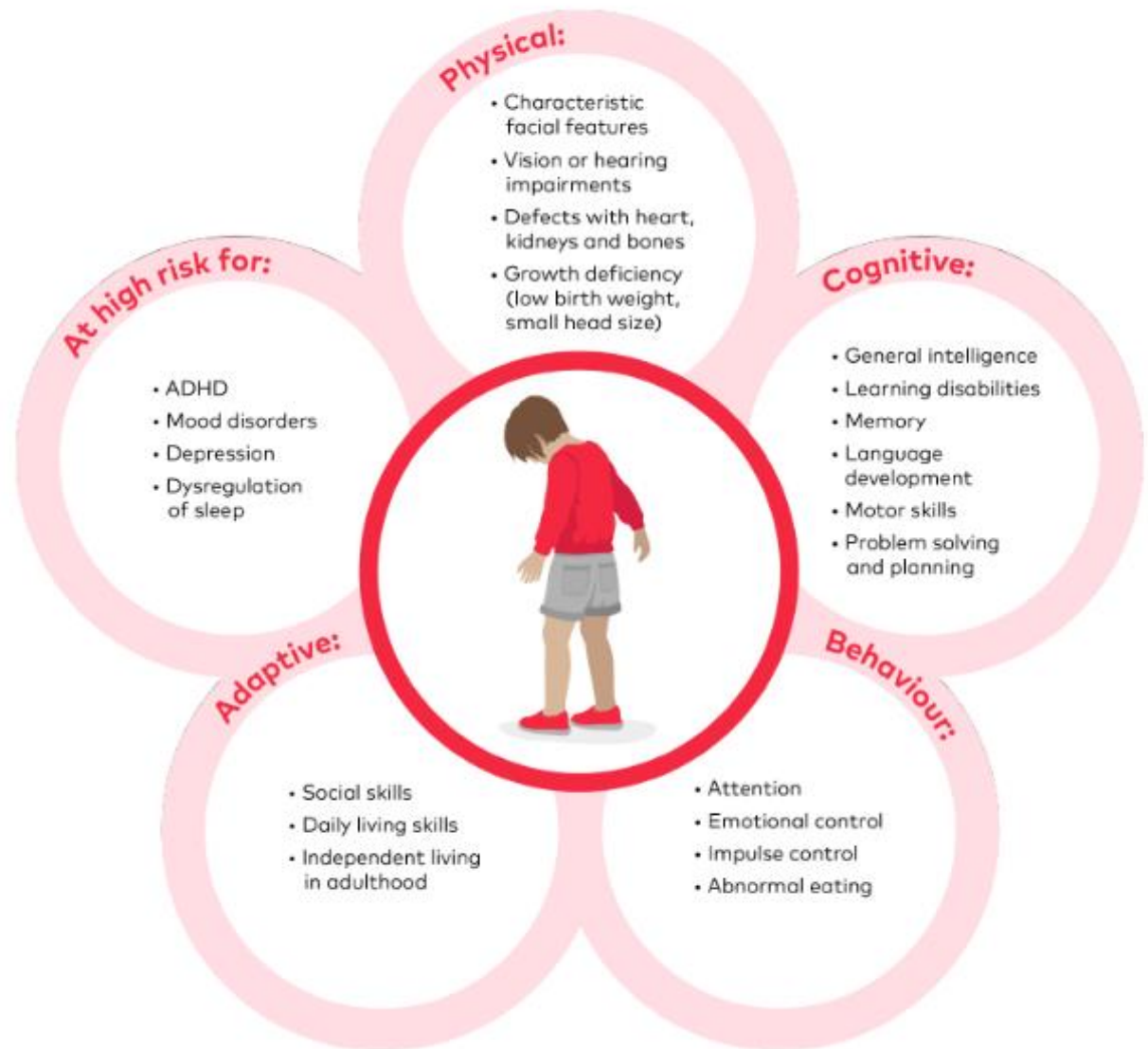
- Alcohol is consumed in all parts of society
- 4 out of 10 pregnancies are unplanned
- Alcohol consumption during pregnancy can have devastating effects on the developing fetus at any stage during the pregnancy.
- Prenatal alcohol exposure is the reason for conditions under the FASD spectrum.
- **Only zero consumption is risk free**



What is FASD?

- Foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)
- Foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)

Figure 1: Illustration of potential difficulties and impairments commonly seen in individuals with FASD



Prevalence estimates FASD/FAS (per 10,000 population)

	Prevalence estimates of FASD (per 10,000 population)	Prevalence estimates of FAS (per 10,000 population)
Denmark	360/10,000 ¹	68.0/10,000 ²
Finland	124/10,000 ¹	23.3/10,000 ²
Iceland	70/10,000 ¹	13.1/10,000 ²
Norway	178/10,000 ¹	33.6/10,000 ²
Sweden	74/10,000 ¹	13.9/10,000 ²

¹Lange et al., 2017 - <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2649225>

²Popova et al., 2017 - [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(17\)30021-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(17)30021-9)



Is it OK to drink a glass of wine or beer when you're pregnant?

	Wrong	Fine	Neither right nor wrong/do not know
Sweden	82%	4%	14%
Norway	84%	3%	13%
Finland	86%	5%	9%
Denmark	64%	9%	27%


IQ-Initiativet, 2022 - https://www.iq.se/app/uploads/dbf6dgab-iq_rapport_slutversion_webb.pdf





*Prenatal exposure to alcohol is a
blind spot that needs to be put under
the spotlight!*



A close-up photograph of a pregnant woman's midsection. She is wearing a long-sleeved shirt with horizontal blue and white stripes. Her hands are gently cradling her bare, rounded pregnant belly. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

Use of alcohol and other substances during pregnancy - in a Nordic perspective

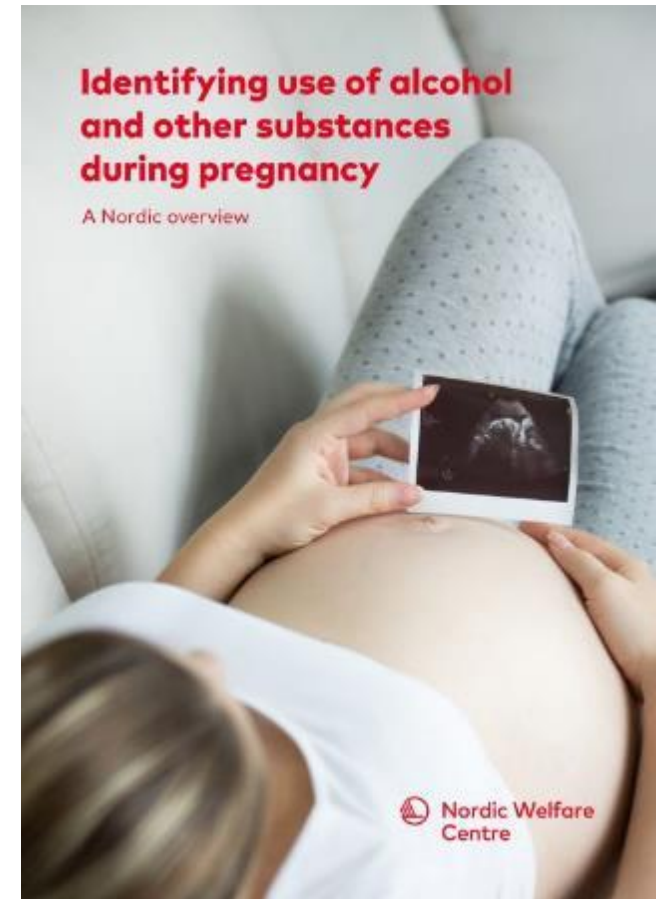
Use of alcohol and other substances during pregnancy – in a Nordic perspective

- Focus on smoking, alcohol and other substance use during pregnancy and the harms to the fetus caused by maternal substance use during pregnancy.
- Initiated a Nordic expert group on FASD
 - Expert meeting
 - Nordic report



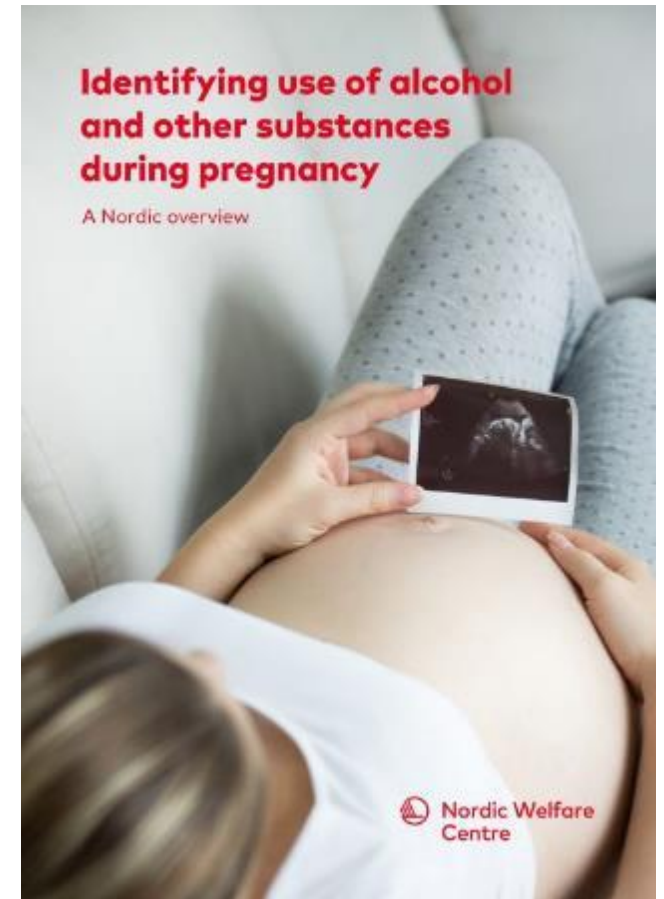
Identifying use of alcohol and other substances during pregnancy – a Nordic overview

- **Primary focus:** Alcohol use during pregnancy
- **Aim:** Overview of the national guidelines, screening instruments, services available
 - Country profiles (FI, SV, DK, NO, IS, GL)
 - Norway: Competence center for children with prenatal alcohol exposure



Conclusions and reflections...

- More prevalence studies on FASD are needed
- The size of the problem is unknown as FASD is an undiagnosed disorder
- Without knowing the size of the problem, it is difficult to influence the political level
- Without the right support for the affected population group, it can lead to stigmatizing
- If no support is available, it is difficult to help the affected individuals and to ensure better interventions targeting alcohol use during pregnancy





Support and follow-up for children born
with prenatal alcohol and drug exposure
– in a Nordic perspective

Support and follow-up for children born with prenatal alcohol and drug exposure

- **Primary focus:** children born with prenatal alcohol exposure, and their families.
- Nordic expert group on FASD
- Focus areas for the report:
 - Knowledge in healthcare
 - Diagnosis
 - Follow-up and support



How to strengthen the focus on children affected by prenatal alcohol exposure to help them lead a good life?

- **Aim:** Recommendations to the Nordic countries
- **8 recommendations:**
 - Training of healthcare professionals on FASD
 - Support and services for individuals with FASD



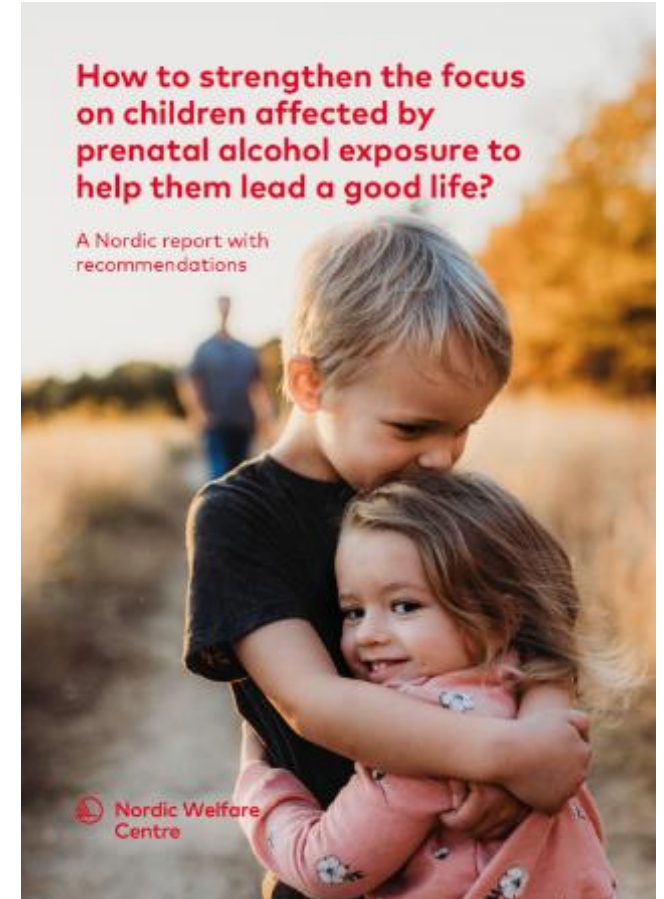
Training of healthcare professionals on FASD

1. Include FASD in the curricula of healthcare professionals' education and provide continuous training on FASD.
2. Provide training for healthcare professionals on guidelines for assessment and diagnosis of conditions within the FASD spectrum and exclude other diagnoses.



Support and services for individuals with FASD

1. Provide a child- and family-centered health and social care system that offers multidisciplinary and cross-sectorial support and services for individuals with FASD and their families.
2. Provide parental training to help parents better understand their child's areas of challenges and respond to their child's needs to improve everyday life.



Summing up and conclusion

“The Nordic countries need to focus policy attention and priority on the public health problem of alcohol use during pregnancy and its consequences for the child in particular. They deserve to be seen, identified, and diagnosed (if necessary) to receive the appropriate support and services they need in order to live a healthy life and reach their full potential, which is also beneficial for society.”



When the safest is zero

- Alcohol use during pregnancy and FASD are significant public health issues warranting more attention and action
- Talk about the consequences of alcohol use during pregnancy
- Make the message clear!
- **Only zero consumption is risk free**



Nice to know...

- FASD Nordic: <http://www.fasdnordic.org/>
- FOKUS FAS:
<https://www.fokusfas.fasportalen.se/>



Do you want to know more?

- Nordicwelfare.org
- Facebook: Nordens välfärdscenter
- Twitter: @Nordicwelfare1
- LinkedIn: Nordic Welfare Centre



Thank you.

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