

SOBER PREGNANCIES: BEYOND AWARENESS TO SUPPORT

Exploring the perceptions that influence alcohol use during pregnancy.

Research Approach

AWARE.org commissioned Frontline Research Group to explore perceptions, behaviours, and support systems relating to alcohol use during pregnancy.

1

The study combined online surveys and face-to-face interviews during March and April 2026.

2

803 South Africans across all nine provinces participated.

3

43% male
53% female
1% Preferred not to say

Key Findings

Myths and Misinformation



22%

could correctly identify FASD by name.



35%

believe that FASD can be cured by medical or traditional treatment.



17%

believe traditional beer is safer than wine and spirits during pregnancy.



35%

believe there is a safe amount of alcohol during pregnancy.



22%

believe FASD is caused by genetics or the father's sperm.

Key Findings

Social Pressure and Culture

91%

say unplanned pregnancies are common.

80%

believe women drink before they realise they are pregnant.

41%

would stop drinking around a pregnant woman.

50%

believe fathers are unlikely to reduce their drinking.

89%

believe mothers alone should be blamed for FASD.

Key Findings

Systems and Inequality

65%

of women report gender-based violence when partners drink.

64%

believe communities lack enough information on FASD.

31%

believe pregnant women turn to partners for support.

53%

believe pregnant women are more likely to lean on maternal support.

Key Findings

Solutions and Responsibilities



93%

agree FASD is preventable.



50%

identify SANCA as their preferred support organisation.



70%

prefer local clinic workshops on FASD.

Key Outcomes

It takes more than Awareness

1

Improved community education

2

Earlier school interventions for girls and boys

3

Greater healthcare engagement in rural areas

4

More involved fathers and partners

5

Stronger community support and action

Programmes

AWARE.org Programmes

University of Johannesburg Partnership

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER CAMPAIGN

Implemented in Gauteng



The project aims to empower young South Africans with knowledge that can prevent one of the country's most urgent yet entirely preventable public health crises.



Educating 5,000 people through campus activations, community outreach, and UJ FM's 40,000 listeners.



Research to understand perceptions of women of childbearing age on alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

University of KwaZulu-Natal Partnership

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER ACTIVATION

Implemented in KwaZulu-Natal



The project empowers young South Africans with knowledge to prevent FASD, as one of the country's most urgent yet entirely preventable public health crises.



Educating 2,000+ students through campus activations.



Research to understand the awareness and knowledge of FASD among university students.

NXTGENWOMXN FOR MOTHERS (SOHK)

Implemented in Gauteng, Western Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo.



Supporting mothers and mothers-to-be with mental health resources and FASD education.



Provides a safe, supportive space for healthy coping strategies.



44% increase in confidence to say no to alcohol while pregnant.



90% of participants said they do not plan to drink while pregnant.

SANCA National Partnership

STRONG PROGRAMME

Implemented across all nine provinces



Committed to raising awareness across South Africa that no amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy and delivering early intervention through programme.



Supporting 15,000 women with education on FASD, resources, and early interventions for healthy pregnancies.