



FASD in Adopted Children in Israel

Emily Rachel Fisher

MD Candidate, 2017

Sackler School of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Israel



Outline

- Background
- Objectives
- Methods
- Results
- Implications

Outline

- Background
- Objectives
- Methods
- Results
- Implications

My story

- Vancouverite MS4 at Tel Aviv University
- Summer after MS1 Dr. Chris Loock
- Shadowed Dr. Koren in FASD clinic
 - 2014 MS2 Social Justice Project
- Ariana Melamed - Israeli journalist, adopted twins, later dx with FASD



FASD epidemiology

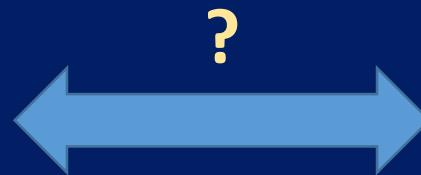


Recorded incidence

- Based on 10 recorded FASD diagnoses 1998-2007
- 1.3 million births over this period



$$\frac{1}{1.2 \text{ million/year}}$$



True incidence

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in Israel: Increased Prevalence in an At-Risk Population

Ariel Tenenbaum MD*, Pnina Hertz PhD, Talia Dor MD, Yael Castiel RN, Alon Sapir MD and Isaiah D. Wexler MD PhD*

Medical Unit for Adoption and Foster Care, Department of Pediatrics, Hadassah University Medical Center, Mount Scopus Campus, Jerusalem, Israel

- Prospective evaluation of 100 candidates for adoption and foster care
- 15% affected with or at-risk for FASD

Alcohol Consumption in Israel: A Public Health and Medical Problem

Yehuda Neumark PhD MPH

Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine, Hadassah-Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

- Centre for adoption found 22-225 children/year born at risk for FASD
- 14% women in maternity wards found to consume alcohol during pregnancy

Reasons for discrepancy

- Insufficient knowledge of FASD in the medical community
 - Questionnaire to genetics and developmental pediatrics program directors
 - 98% response rate
 - <10% reported sufficient knowledge of FASD among physicians
- Decreased awareness among the general public
 - Historically Israel does not have a drinking culture
 - Religions call for special care of women during pregnancy



Senecky et al. 2009, *Isr Med Assoc J.*
Neumark, 2012, *Isr Med Assoc J.*

Outline

- Background
- Objectives
- Methods
- Results
- Implications

1. Determine the prevalence of suspected FASD from a special institution in Israel

- Bnei Arazim – educational, behavioural and medical center for children with special needs
 - High-risk population
 - Public service, children from all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds
 - Accessible files, central location, children from all parts of Israel



2. Establish a database as a starting point for epidemiological studies

- Record prospective and retrospective diagnoses
 - Track epidemiology
- Registry development
 - Access to patients/families
 - Interventional trials
 - Service development
 - Healthcare

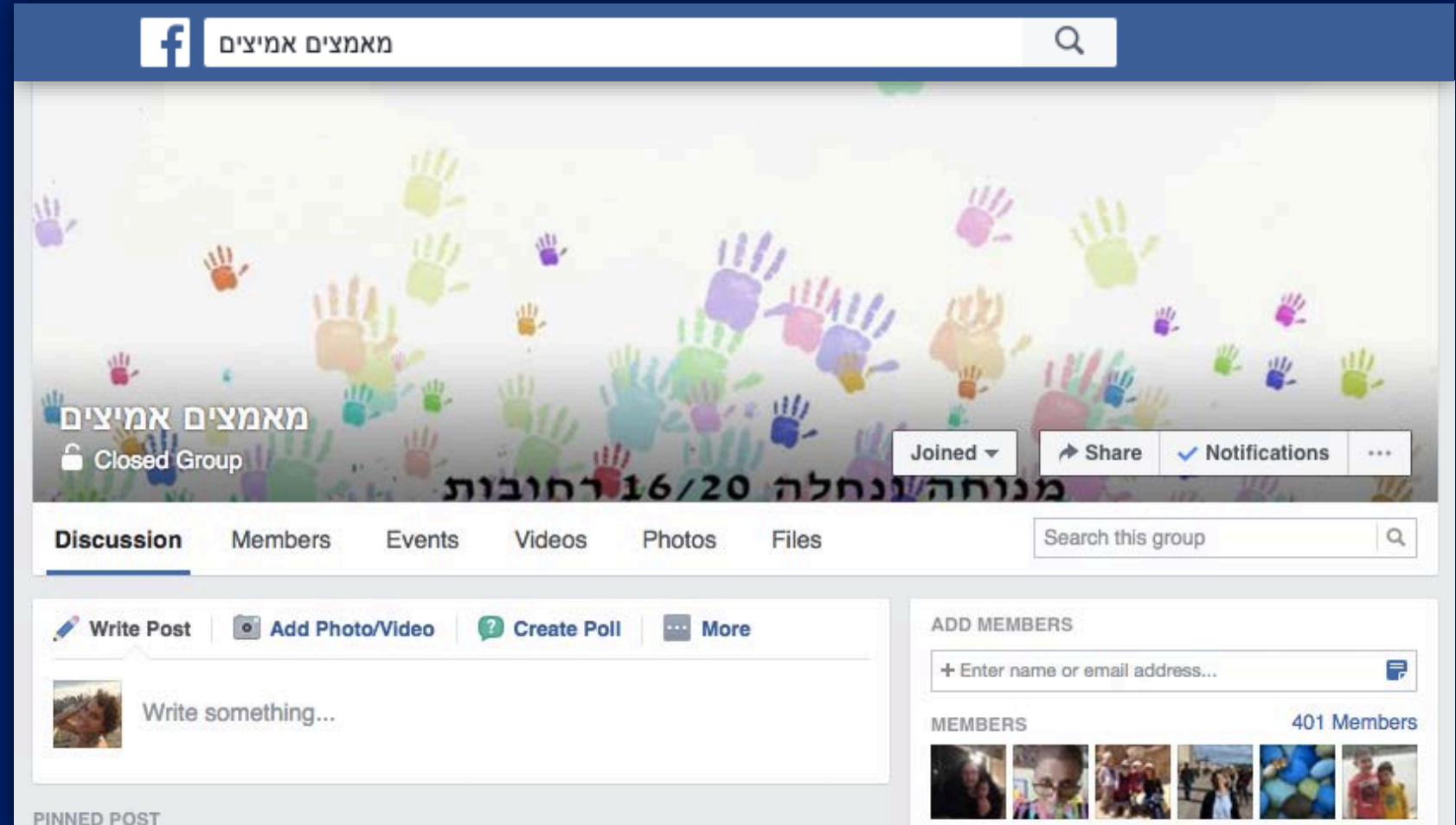


3. Contribute to developing FASD awareness and health, social, and educational services

- Resource allocation to FASD
 - Interventional trials
 - Data for ministry of education and ministry of health funding

3. Contribute to developing FASD awareness and health, social, and educational services

- Support parent advocacy group
- “Brave Adoptees”
- 401 members



Outline

- Background
- Objectives
- Methods
- Results
- Implications

Methods



1. Adoption status
2. History of maternal alcohol/drug abuse
3. Medical diagnoses
4. Medication use
5. Impairment in the published neurobehavioral categories

FASD categories

Maternal alcohol abuse
during pregnancy

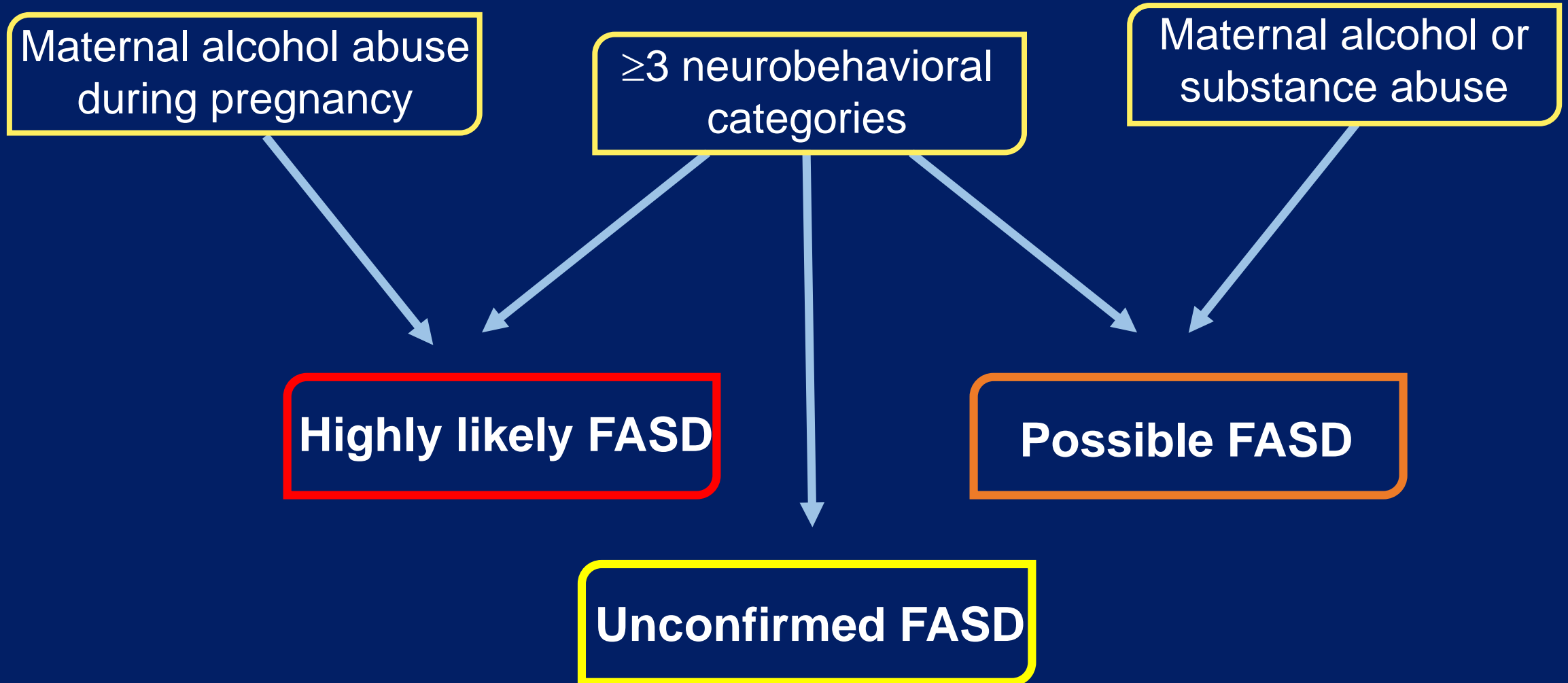
neurobehavioral
categories

Maternal alcohol or
substance abuse



- Motor skills
- Neuroanatomy/
neurophysiology
- Cognition
- Language
- Academic
achievement
- Memory
- Attention
- Executive function
- Impulse control
- Hyperactivity
- Affect regulation
- Adaptive behaviour
- Social skills
- Social communication

FASD categories

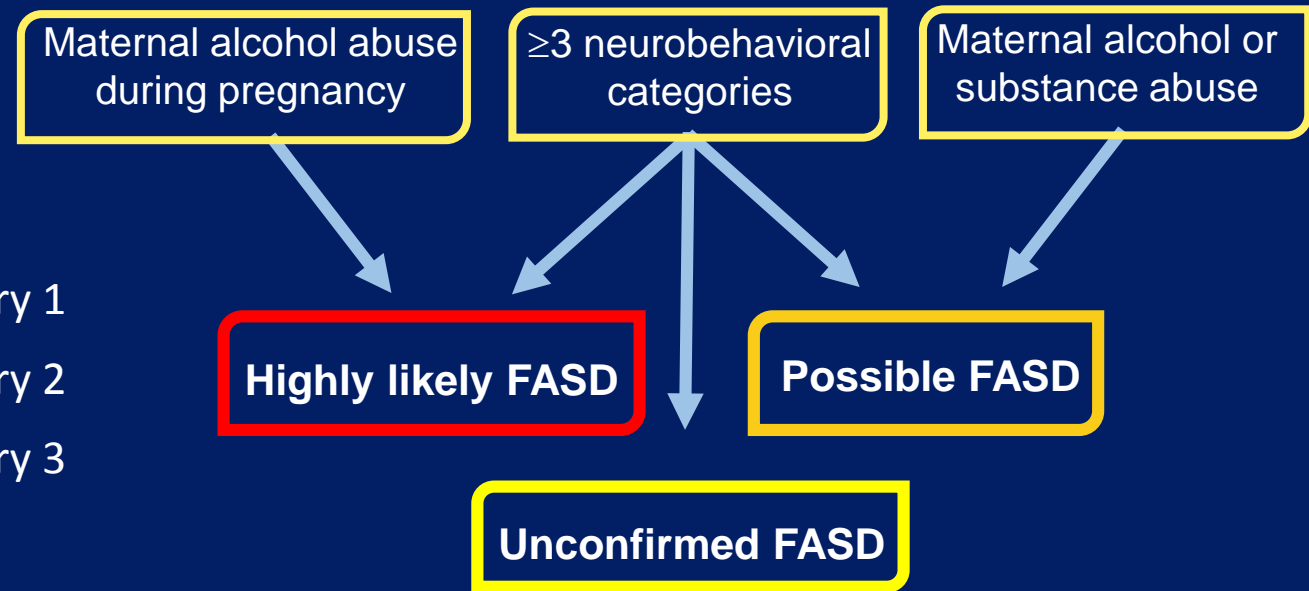
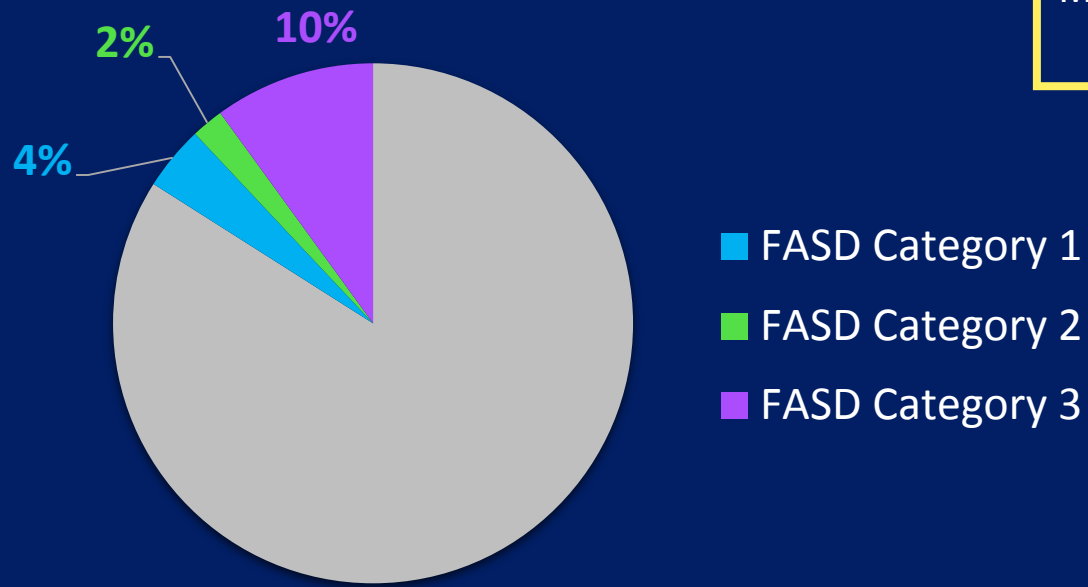


Outline

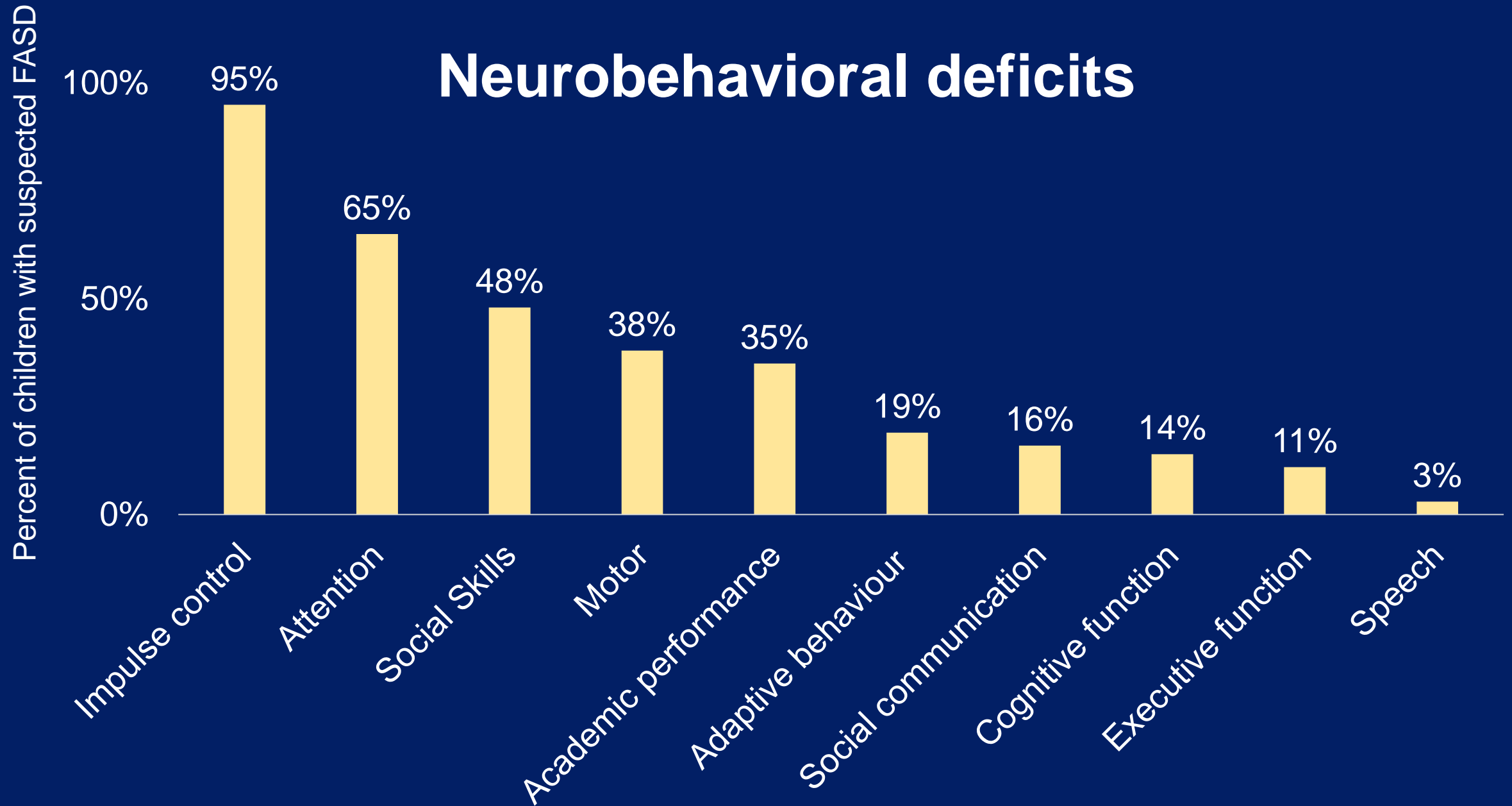
- Background
- Objectives
- Methods
- Results
- Implications

Results

- 237 files analyzed
- 39 children, **16% had suspected FASD**



Neurobehavioral deficits



Results

- Average age at intake to the Centre 13
- Average age in 2016 23
- Adopted 69%

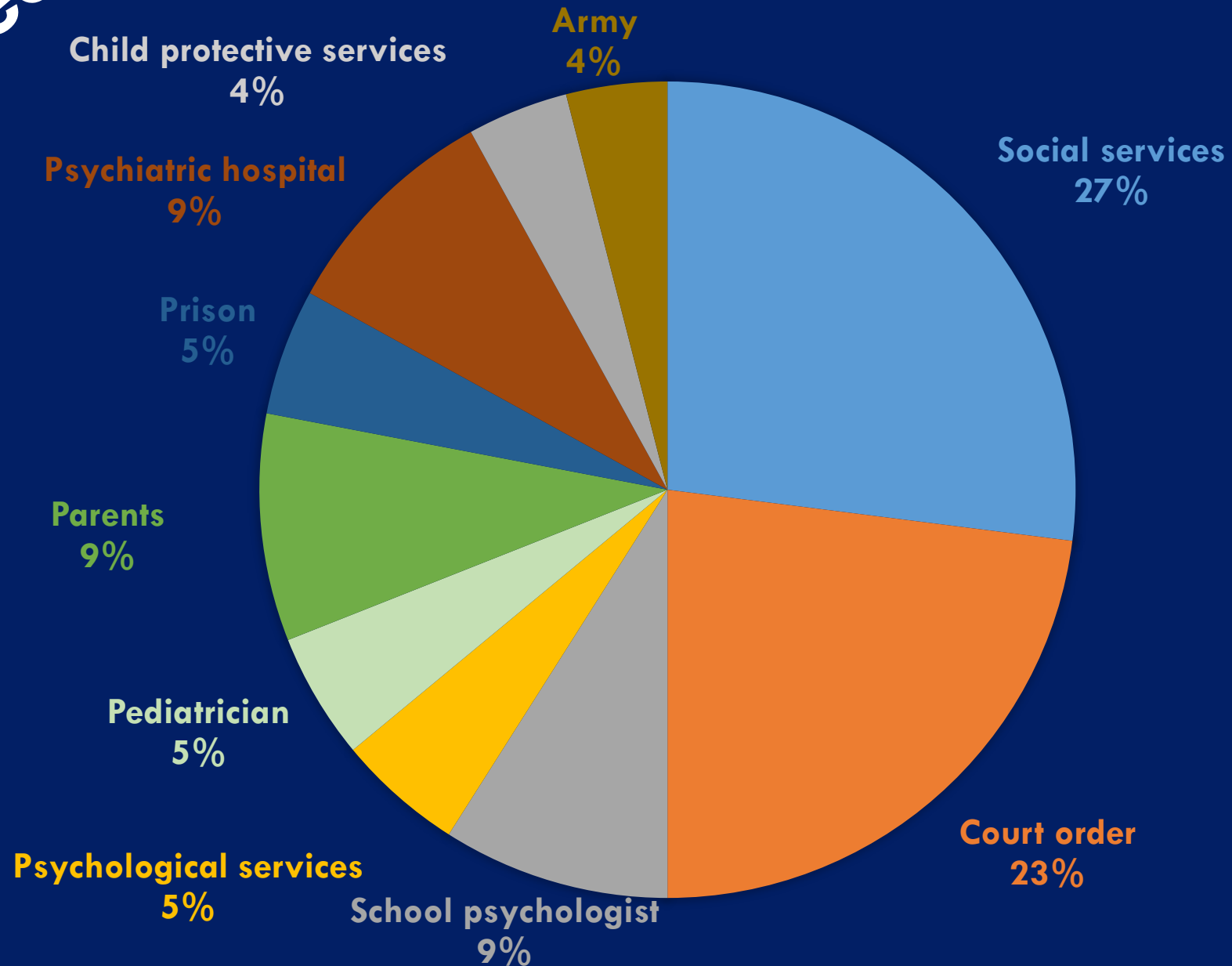


Results

- Average age at intake to the Centre 13
- Average age in 2016 23
- Adopted 69%



Referral sources



Outline

- Background
- Objectives
- Methods
- Results
- Implications



The infographic features a dark blue background with two groups of stylized, colorful cartoon children. On the left, a group of about 10 children is shown, with a magnifying glass focusing on two of them. On the right, a much larger group of about 50 children is shown, with a magnifying glass focusing on a small cluster of about 10 children. Two blue callout boxes with white text provide statistics. A red-bordered box at the bottom contains a summary statement.

16%
**39 children with
suspected FASD**

**37,000 children
with suspected
FASD**

8.5% of Israelis aged ≤ 18 are
registered with a disability
“high risk”

Our high-risk population

Up to **1.4%** of Israel's population ≤ 18 may be affected with FASD



Our results support the notion that FASD in Israel is likely to be more common than previously thought

Missed cases?

- Centre is not available to refugees; 0.5% of the population
- Ethiopian people make up 1.5% of Israel's population, yet 30% of Ethiopian children end up going to juvenile prison at least once
 - High-risk population not adequately represented in our study



Increasing awareness

- Diagnostic strategy development
- Treatment development
- Educational development for adoptive parents
 - Ministry of Welfare
 - Adoption agencies
- Resource allocation for family support



Future direction

- Lobby the “Knesset” – Ministries of Health, Education, and Welfare
 - Resources for the FASD community (retreat center in the works)
 - Develop criteria for adoption intake
 - Education for adoptive parents





Future direction



- Ascertain children with suspected FASD from psychiatric wards, juvenile prisons, refugee clinics, inner city schools, and social services
- Develop proposal to fund an FASD registry
 - Physicians track diagnoses
 - Access patients for therapy/trials
 - Let's move beyond a Facebook group!

THANK YOU!

Ariana Melamed

Dr. Blank

Dr. Koren

Dr. Loock

Dr. Oberlander

Discussion point

- When it's difficult to obtain public funding, how do you fund your FASD programs?



THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

Poster 7, emilyRfisher@gmail.com