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Study reveals SA's 'crisis' due to alcohol

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FOETAL alcohol syndrome (FAS) is a humanitarian crisis in South Africa, Social Development provincial head Robert Macdonald said after the release of findings into a three-year study centred on the West Coast.

The Foundation for Alcohol Related Research (FARR) conducted research in the Saldanha Bay Municipality and found that 64 out of every 1 000 children were affected by the disorder.

Grade 1 pupils at 14 schools in the area were medically examined to assess their general health and nutrition status, as well as the presence of physical features of foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).

Macdonald said the findings were concerning. "It's a combined impact of alcohol consumption and poor nutrition that makes FASD particularly bad in the country.

"If we look at the statistics, it is a humanitarian crisis in South Africa."

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SA's FAS crisis

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The same study in Kimberley in 2014 revealed that 60 children per 1 000 were affected.

In Witzenberg Municipality in the Western Cape, a 2013 study revealed 96 of every 1 000 children had FASD.

A rate of 122 per 1 000 children in De Aar, Northern Cape, makes it the highest reported rate in the world.

FARR urged caution among women.