



Monthly Newsletter

From the International Clearinghouse

March 2013 (issue 2013-3)

What's going on regarding birth defects

- **"Show Your Love Campaign"**. This CDC-supported campaign to promote **preconception health and healthcare** aims at increasing the number of women who plan their pregnancies and engage in healthy behaviors before becoming pregnant. It has separate messaging for women who plan a pregnancy and those who don't want to start a family. Information and materials at www.cdc.gov/preconception/showyourlove/index.html (*Marian Bakker*)
- **WHO report on the possible effects of the nuclear plant incident in Fukushima on the Japanese population and worldwide**. This 200-page report by international experts concludes that predicted risks are low. Specifically, they anticipate no observable increases in the rate of miscarriages, stillbirths, birth defects, or mental disabilities in babies born after the accident, or in rates of cancer. The report also calls for long-term health monitoring of those at high risk, the provision of necessary medical follow-up, and support services. Full report at http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/78218/1/9789241505130_eng.pdf (*Eduardo Castilla*)
- **"Multiple neural tube defects (NTDs) may not be very rare"**. In a comment to the paper by SK Mahalik et al (*Childs Nervous System* journal), R Brian Lowry, B Sibbald and HB Sarnat report on NTD cases in ACASS for 1995-2005, summarize the neurulation process during embryo development, and conclude that the findings and interpretations by Mahalik et al (on that multiple NTDs may not be very rare in the general population, especially the populations with high incidence of NTDs; and on that better insights into the molecular pathways governing this tightly regulated process can help in establishing the pathogenesis of multiple NTDs) are quite plausible in the context of known neuroembryological factors of neural tube closure. (*R Brian Lowry*)

News from the Headquarter and Executive Committee

- **ICBDSR Annual Meeting 2013**: the planning committee (Marian Bakker, Adriana Benavides, Simonetta Zezza, Eva Bermejo-Sánchez, Mark Canfield, and Gioacchino Scarano) is busy developing the program and arranging the details for the meeting in San José, Costa Rica, **3 to 6 December 2013**. Please **SAVE the DATE**, and **if you have suggestions for themes/topics** for the scientific session, please email them promptly to the Center. Your suggestions are more than welcome, and they will be forwarded to the planning committee. More details to come soon. In the meantime, note the deadline for abstracts (below, 31 August 2013).
- **Clearinghouse listserv (discussion group)**. This listserv, just launched, aims at supporting our community by helping share ideas and news, and providing a members-only forum to discuss the birth defect issues that you most care about. We look forward to your active participation and hope you find it useful.
- **Applications accepted for 2013 "Alessandra Lisi Award"**. Details at www.icbdsr.org: please note the revised procedures and criteria, and the deadline for applications (30 April 2013).
- **2012 Annual Report**. It is nearly completed, **waiting on a few Programs** to provide the list of papers published by Programs in 2011-2012, and update on program description (if different from what is in the 2011 report: www.icbdsr.org/filebank/documents/ar2005/Report2011.pdf).

Upcoming deadlines

- **30 April 2013**: Nominations for the Alessandra Lisi Award (email to centre@icbdsr.org)
- **20 May 2013**: Data for the **2nd quarter 2012**, to be published in the **Quarterly Report/Krystalos**.
- **31 August 2013**: Abstracts for 2013 Annual Meeting (details to be made available in the near future).

Would you like to contribute with any news from your program for next Monthly Newsletter?

Please send contributions, comments or questions to centre@icbdsr.org