



## Monthly Newsletter From the International Clearinghouse May 2013 (issue 2013-5)

### What's going on regarding birth defects

- **Syphilis** continues to affect large numbers of pregnant women, causing substantial perinatal morbidity and mortality that could be prevented by early testing and treatment. A recent paper in *PlosOne Medicine* highlights the need to improve the quality of antenatal care and coverage (<http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1001396>)
- The British Medical Association (BMA) calls for **mandatory folic acid fortification** to save lives and prevent disability (<http://bma.org.uk/news-views-analysis/the-bma-blog/2013/april/save-lives-and-prevent-disability-with-our-daily-bread>)
- Brian Lowry and his colleagues have published a short paper on **multiple site neural tube defects** in *Child's Nervous System*. A pdf of this paper can be found at <http://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs00381-013-2071-2.pdf> or is available on request at the Center.
- The National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) Publications and Communications Committee continues to update weekly the database of "**Articles of Potential Interest (API)**". Articles that may be of interest to NBDPN members are selected from a list of recently published articles generated using birth defects related keywords. The APIs include the titles and links to their PubMed abstracts. The APIs can be found at a short link available on the [www.nbdpn.org](http://www.nbdpn.org) homepage, under the "NBDPN Resources quick links" section, or at [http://mms.nbdpn.org/news\\_archive.php?org\\_id=NBDP&vm=1273?navtitle=idxpubs](http://mms.nbdpn.org/news_archive.php?org_id=NBDP&vm=1273?navtitle=idxpubs)
- Call for abstracts: **6th International Conference on Birth Defects and Disabilities in the Developing world**, November 10-13, 2013 – Cebu Philippines. visit <http://www.ICBD2013.com> for additional details on the conference. The deadline for abstracts is June 30, through <http://www.icbd2013.com/abstract.html>

### News from the Headquarter and Executive Committee

- The 2013 **Training Program on Surveillance and Prevention of Birth Defects and Preterm Births** is forthcoming (Geneva, May 27-31, 2013). We have 25 trainees from 16 countries and three observers (two from CDC and one from Flour Fortification Initiative). We have added this year a distance-based component, which reviews key issues in the epidemiology and prevention of birth defects, to prepare trainees for in-depth discussion and practical case studies.
- **The Executive Committee** will have its next meeting at the Clearinghouse Headquarter in Rome on June 27 and 28, 2013.
- **The 2013 ICBSR Annual Meeting** is confirmed for 3-6 December 2013 in San José, Costa Rica. The core organizing committee includes Gioacchino Scarano, Mark Canfield, Adriana Benavides, Eva Bermejo Sanchez and Marian Bakker.
- During the Annual Meeting there will be a workshop on **Genomics in Birth Defects Research**, organized by Osvaldo Mutchinick and Gioacchino Scarano. A questionnaire will be distributed soon to all the members to explore interest, local (country) facilities to obtain biological samples (blood, saliva, tissues) and specific rules and ethics governing the storage and shipping of this samples for the extraction of DNA to investigate the association of gene variants of selected candidate genes with a selected congenital malformation(s).
- The **ICBSR's listserv** has been very well received by members as a useful tool for communication and discussion. Everyone is encouraged to participate in it for group discussions that can help our organization to move forward.
- The Center is planning out an online survey on the **use of antidepressants in pregnancy**. Your participation in this survey will be very much appreciated.

### Upcoming deadlines

- **20 May 2013:** Data for the **2nd quarter 2012**, to be published in the **Quarterly Report/Krystalos**.
- **31 May 2013:** ICBSR's Distinguished Service Award (DSA) application. DSA announcement available at [www.icbsr.org](http://www.icbsr.org)
- **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@icbsr.org](mailto:centre@icbsr.org)*