



Monthly Newsletter

International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research

December 2015

Issue 2015-12

What's Going on Regarding Birth Defects

- The **January 2016 National Birth Defects Prevention Month** packet is now available online. The theme is “Making Healthy Choices to Prevent Birth Defects – Make a PACT for Prevention.”
P – Plan ahead
A – Avoid harmful substances
C – Choose a healthy lifestyle
T – Talk to your doctor
Materials available at <http://www.nbdpn.org/bdpm2016.php> (entire packet can be downloaded at http://www.nbdpn.org/docs/2016BDPMpacket_FINAL.pdf). This packet was developed by the US National Birth Defects Prevention Network, in collaboration with many partners, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Teratology Society (TS), and state birth defects programs. There are several new resources, e.g., a handout on “paternal contribution to a developing baby’s health” and a social media toolkit. The toolkit has suggestions for how you can use social media to raise awareness about #1in33 and join the conversation about birth defects prevention using #LivingMyPACT.
- **World Birth Defects Day (WBDD) – March 3, 2016:** we are receiving several applications from organizations, institutions and associations interested in being recognized as “Participating Organization of World Birth Defects Day”. If your organization is interested in this recognition, please read the “World Birth Defects Day Charter Document” and fill in the Application form, both available in the section “World Birth Defects Day 3 March, 2016” on the ICBDSR website www.icbdsr.org (English and Spanish version). In the same section of the website you can download the *presentation “Use of New Media for Public Health Messaging”*, delivered by Salimah R. Walani, Director of Global Health Programs, March of Dimes Foundation, at the 42nd ICBSR Annual Meeting (Spoleto, Italy, Sept 11, 2015). This slide set offers a wide range of inputs and information on the health messaging through social media, it may be useful for an active participation in the WBDD initiatives.
- The **3rd European Congress on Preconception Health and Care** will take place in Uppsala (Sweden) from 17 to 18 February 2016. Further information at <http://www.pubcare.uu.se/ecphc2016/>.
Facebook-event for the congress: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1653934538184347/>
Facebook-page for The PrePreg Network: <https://www.facebook.com/prepregnetwork>
- PAHO/WHO alerted that in some countries of South America and in French Polynesia there is a concern for a possible **increase of CNS anomalies, characterized by microcephaly**, which may be linked to a **Zika virus infection during the first trimester of pregnancy**. Also in some countries of Central America autochthonous circulation of Zika virus has been confirmed. More info: http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_topics&view=article&id=427&Itemid=41484&lang=en

News from the ICBSR Centre and Executive Committee

- **ICBSR Mortality Study:** The final protocol and the spreadsheets for providing data have been distributed among participating programs and Principal Investigators. The deadline for submitting data is flexible: each participating program can decide its own deadline. The participants are kindly requested to fix the preferred deadline and send this date to centre@icbdsr.org—please, possibly not later than March 15, 2016.
- We welcome **Sonja Kiuru-Kuhlefeldt** in the Clearinghouse working group. Dr Kiuru-Kuhlefeldt has been recently appointed as **new Program Director** of the **Finnish Malformation Register**. We want to thank Annukka Ritvanen, retired since July, for her valuable collaboration during the many years as Program Director of the Finnish Register, and also Mika Gissler for taking care of the communication with the Clearinghouse after Annukka’s retirement.



*from the Executive Committee of the
Clearinghouse and ICBSR Centre Staff*