



Monthly Newsletter

International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research

January 2016

Issue 2016-1

What's Going on Regarding Birth Defects

- **World Birth Defects Day (WBDD) – March 3, 2016** is only a few weeks away. Everyone can join the initiative: look at the things you can do which are listed in the “*World Birth Defects Day Advocacy Toolkit 2016*” available at the WBDD page on the ICBDSR website www.icbdsr.org. Please, remember that **your contribution to this global initiative is unique and extremely valuable**.
- **Zika virus infection during pregnancy:**As we informed in our December Newsletter, there is a concern for an **increase of CNS anomalies, characterized by microcephaly**, which may be linked to a **Zika virus infection during the first trimester of pregnancy**. In May 2015, WHO reported the first local transmission of Zika virus in the Western Hemisphere, with autochthonous (locally acquired) cases identified in Brazil. As of January 15, 2016, local transmission had been identified in at least 14 countries or territories in the Americas. More info from PAHO/WHO at http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_topics&view=article&id=427&Itemid=41484&%3ehttp://www.paho.org/hq Further spread to other countries in the region is likely, and there is also concern about the risk for travelers and health care providers. More info at: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/index.html>.
- We are thrilled to announce that the paper “**Building capacity for birth defects surveillance in Africa: Implementation of an intermediate birth defects surveillance workshop**” has been published in the Journal of Global Health Perspectives in December 2015. Authorship includes colleagues from CDC, WHO, IF-SBH, ICBDSR and other institutions. It summarizes the development and implementation of the online pre-course training and in-person surveillance workshop conducted between Dec 2014 and March 2015 for representatives from six African countries. The in-person surveillance workshop was held in Arusha, Tanzania on 2015 March 2-6. Feedback given by participants provided valuable lessons learned that can be applied to subsequent trainings and workshops. Full text available at http://jglobalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/JGHP_Flores_Alina1.pdf
- **January 2016** is the **National Birth Defects Prevention Month**. 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 are available at <http://www.nbdpn.org/bdpm2016.php> (entire packet is available for download at http://www.nbdpn.org/docs/2016BDPMpacket_FINAL.pdf).
- 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/>.

News from the ICBDSR Centre and Executive Committee

- **ICBDSR 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, possibly not later than March 15, 2016.
- We welcome **Gareth Baynam**, who is taking over for Carol Bower at the **Western Australia Register (WARDA)**. The Clearinghouse wants to thank Carol Bower for her valuable collaboration during the many years as Program Director of the WARDA Register, as member of the Faculty of the ICBDSR Training Programs and as past Officer. We wish to have her continue advice and contribute to the ICBDSR in the future.

SAVE THE DATE: 18-21 September 2016
43rd Annual ICBDSR Meeting in Magdeburg, Germany