



Monthly Newsletter

International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research

February 2016

Issue 2016-2

What's Going on Regarding Birth Defects

- **World Birth Defects Day (WBDD) – March 3, 2016** is a few weeks away. It is through our collective voices that we will raise awareness about birth defects and World Birth Defects Day. Everyone can join the initiative: visit the WBDD page at www.icbdsr.org and support the WBDD on Thunderclap at <http://thndr.me/RKrAZR>.
- **Zika virus infection during pregnancy:** look at the dedicated page on the ICBDSR website www.icbdsr.org, created for gathering and making available the official information regarding particularly microcephaly with or without neurological or other organ anomalies and its possible association with the Zika virus infection.
- **29 February 2016** marks the ninth international **Rare Disease Day** coordinated by EURORDIS. On and around this day hundreds of patient organizations from countries and regions all over the world will hold awareness-raising activities based on the slogan "Join us in making the voice of rare diseases heard". More info at <http://www.rarediseaseday.org/>
- This month's **CDC Vital Signs** (<http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/>) presents information on the **risk of alcohol exposure during pregnancy among U.S. women**. Vital Signs is a CDC report that appears on the first Tuesday of the month. It includes a Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) Early Release, a graphic fact sheet and website, a media release, and social media tools. Most of the materials are available in English and Spanish. Alcohol use during pregnancy can cause fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), which are physical, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities that last a lifetime. It is recommended that women who are pregnant or might be pregnant not drink alcohol at all. FASDs do not occur if a developing baby is not exposed to alcohol before birth. Main Findings:
 - ✓ 3.3 million U.S. women are at risk of exposing their developing baby to alcohol (also known as an alcohol-exposed pregnancy). This is because they are drinking, sexually active, and not using birth control to prevent pregnancy.
 - ✓ 3 in 4 women who want to get pregnant as soon as possible report drinking alcohol.Data from the report come from CDC's 2011-2013 National Survey of Family Growth, which gathers information on family life, marriage, divorce, pregnancy, infertility, use of contraception, and men's and women's health. National estimates of alcohol-exposed pregnancy were calculated among non-pregnant, non-sterile women aged 15–44 years. Women and their healthcare providers can work together to prevent alcohol use during pregnancy.
- **Viet Nam** will celebrate the Year of the Monkey with a **decree for food fortification**. The legislation includes requirements to fortify wheat flour, salt, and cooking oil. Read more about the Viet Nam decision here: http://www.ffinetwork.org/about/stay_informed/releases/VietNam.html
This makes 85 countries with mandates to fortify one or more industrially milled cereal grain with at least iron or folic acid. See more details and download updated maps here: http://www.ffinetwork.org/global_progress/index.php
- 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

- The Clearinghouse, as NGO in official relations with WHO, submitted a **statement at the 138th WHO Executive Board Meeting**, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from January 25 to 30, 2016. The statement was published under the item 7 (*Promoting health through the life course*) of the Agenda and it is available for a limited time at this link: <https://apps.who.int/ngostatements/meetingoutline/7>. A PDF version is available at www.icbdsr.org
- **ICBDSR Mortality Study:** Participants are kindly requested to fix the preferred deadline for providing data - possibly not later than March 15, 2016. Thanks.

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